

our colleague, NORMA TORRES, pointed out, for people who are at retirement age, people who want to retire but can't because they have these generational issues that are costly and they can't move on and then follow through with their version of the American Dream in different phases of their life.

What I am hearing is that this is not just an issue of young people who are in college. This is an issue of entire families wondering whether or not their children can afford to do that and whether the family can come together for that bright individual who wants to succeed and wants to get that education, and yet they are doubting themselves as to whether or not that is the path for them.

That is unfortunate because the fact of the matter is that the United States of America for many, many generations has been the place for hope and expectation of a brighter future for generations. Yet, at the same time, because, in my opinion, Congress is not doing enough to make sure that we can right the situation, we can make sure that we can right size the environment of making sure that when a young bright person in America wants to get an education, that there are ways in which they can afford to do that, regardless of where they come from, regardless of whether their parents are farm workers, like my parents, or whether their parents live on the other side of town where they can afford to do that.

Our environments and the universities shouldn't be left only to the individuals who have the affluency to be able to be in that environment. One of the reasons why we have created these wonderful universities that have 5,000, 10,000, 20,000, and 30,000 people there is so that they can be an eclectic environment, so people can learn to become friends with people that otherwise they might not have rubbed elbows with.

What I am hearing is that people are afraid. Too many Americans are afraid. I am hearing that too many bright individuals are doubting whether or not they can afford to get that degree, not that they can't do it, not that they are not bright enough.

The problem that I am hearing from my constituents and people around America is that it is tough to make that decision because too many young people now have examples that they are in debt \$100,000, \$200,000, \$300,000. And then on top of that, they can't find a right size job to fit their skill set. And then on top of that, they have got this mounting debt. That is something that too many people are afraid to enter into. That is unfortunate. It shouldn't happen in our country.

I am glad that Mr. SWALWELL is bringing this issue up. Let's continue to try to do many, many things about righting the ship that we have about our young people being too afraid to incur the kind of debt that they are forced to do in order to get an education.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Amen. Well said.

I think young Californians, in my experience, want us to be as collaborative in solving this problem as they are in charting the innovation economy. You are right. Out of those environments in our UC and Cal State systems and our community colleges, we are creating minds and experiences that are building this new economy. So they look to us and say: Why aren't Democrats and Republicans working together?

Right now, I see our caucus is the only one that is offering solutions. I think we are putting our hands out there saying: Work with us, we are ready to talk about this, but you have got to come to the table because Republican and Democratic kids across this country are in financial quicksand and are counting on us.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. CÁRDENAS and Mrs. TORRES.

That will conclude our one-year celebration of Future Forum. We are certainly not looking backwards. We are looking to the future. We have more visits ahead across the country, across California, and, of course, with my colleagues who have participated already.

Continue this conversation with us at #FutureForum or, of course, follow @RepSwalwell on Twitter, Snapchat, and Facebook.

This generation is aspirational and optimistic. It just needs its leaders here in this House and the majority party, I think, to join with the Democrats to put forward solutions that can move our generation forward.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

NATIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATORS WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES) for 30 minutes.

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, California is a much warmer State and much more beautiful, if I may add that.

I rise today to recognize National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.

After 17½ years as a 911 dispatcher, I know firsthand the challenges our public safety dispatchers face, the stress they are put under, and the critical importance of their work. That is why I am proud to introduce a resolution commemorating National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.

I remember working the graveyard shift at the LAPD, sitting four floors below ground, taking calls from people from all walks of life, often during their most vulnerable time in their lives.

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In fact, it was my work as a 911 dispatcher that got me involved in politics.

When I was working for the LAPD, I took a call from a little girl who ended up being murdered at the hands of her uncle. When I answered that 911 call, all I could hear was thumping. Later, I learned that that thumping noise was her head being bashed against the wall. Soon after, five shots were fired, and she was murdered—11 years old, murdered at the hands of her uncle.

I yield to my colleague, the gentleman from the San Fernando Valley, Congressional District 29, TONY CÁRDENAS, to share with us some information about how he supports 911 dispatchers in his district.

Mr. CÁRDENAS. I thank the gentlewoman.

To my colleague, NORMA TORRES, thank you for bringing up this very, very important opportunity for awareness of this issue on the floor of the House of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, yes, it is National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, but it is really important for us to understand that, in America, everything starts with us—the individuals.

I will just add to this dialogue that it is up to all of us to keep our communities safe. If we do that well, maybe we won't need so many 911 operators. We have heard so many times and too often of those frantic calls when someone is calling 911 because the action has already started, because the atrocity has already begun. As Americans, we should be vigilant and understand that we all have a collective responsibility to be the safe keepers of our communities so that we minimize the number of 911 calls any one individual in our neighborhoods or in our communities across America would ever have to make.

I take this opportunity to mention someone, Krystal Blackburn, who is the assistant supervisor at the Harrodsburg Police Department. She has been a 911 operator for some time now, and I quote one portion of what was mentioned on the House floor this afternoon:

911 has changed my life. It has shaped me, and I have grown into a role that I wasn't even sure I wanted in the beginning. It has become a way of life that I wouldn't change for any reason. I am 911.

Once again, ladies and gentlemen, I think it is important for us to take the opportunity to recognize and appreciate the eclectic responsibilities that friends and neighbors have in every community across America. In every situation, let people take on that professionalism so as to be the solution—to be the go-to person—when we need them most. It is important for people to understand that our dispatchers at 911 and that our safety community around America deserve our support and deserve our recognition. Most importantly, they deserve our thanks.

I thank the gentlewoman for giving me the opportunity to express my thoughts on this very important issue.

Mrs. TORRES. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, so few people know what it is like to be an emergency dispatcher and don't truly understand how crucial our role is. They don't get that without us. They don't get that without you. First responders wouldn't be able to do their jobs without someone's answering that 911 call.

Back when I served in the California State Assembly, the State budget crisis meant that 911 dispatchers were furloughed because they weren't exempt as public safety professionals. Hundreds of calls went unanswered. Who knows how many lives were put at risk? I spent months badgering Governor Schwarzenegger until he realized the catastrophic effect the policy was having on our State. God forbid there had been an event like San Bernardino during that time and calls couldn't get through or first responders didn't know where to go.

Sadly, too many people think of dispatchers as a little more than glorified receptionists. This means that they don't often get the resources, the training, and the support they need and deserve in order to do their jobs. Dispatchers are the first points of contact in the event of an emergency, and they are the sole link between those in trouble and the personnel who can help them. Better training and more support would go a long way toward improving service and increasing staff retention.

During this year's State of the Union, I had the honor of inviting as my guest the dispatch supervisor who directed radio and call traffic during the San Bernardino attack. While the police, fire, and EMS responders definitely deserve a lot of credit, there had been very little mention in the media about the key role the public safety telecommunicators played.

Annemarie Teall and her team were the ones behind the scene, making sure the first responders were deployed efficiently and effectively. They fielded calls from the community, from law enforcement agencies, and from callers from all over the country and the world. During a situation that can quickly become pure chaos, they stayed calm, took action, and helped save lives.

When she was here, Annemarie discussed the training she had received in dealing with these types of situations and how grateful she was for that training. Unfortunately, this kind of training isn't a regular occurrence.

Without public safety telecommunicators, our first responders can't do their jobs. The response of police, firefighters, and paramedics is dependent upon the quality and accuracy of the information the dispatcher is able to provide. Public safety telecommunicators don't just take calls and relay information; they also play a key role in coordinating multiple teams of first responders from multiple agencies during times of crisis. They are a vital link for police, fire, and EMS as they monitor their activities by radio and provide

them with information that can ensure their safety and an efficient, effective response.

911 dispatchers have also helped in the apprehension of criminals and have helped bring them to justice because, in many cases, they are witnesses to the crimes as they occur. In the case that I stated earlier, I was the only witness. It was that recorded call that brought justice to that little girl.

Public Safety Telecommunicators Week not only provides us with the opportunity to recognize the hard work of our dispatchers, but it is also a reminder to our constituents of the importance of maintaining emergency lines free for just that—emergencies. There is no excuse for 911 abuse. Some estimates indicate that 15 to 20 percent of incoming calls are nonemergencies. These calls could prevent legitimate emergency calls from getting through and being answered. For example, as a 911 dispatcher, I remember receiving calls from those who were asking for directions to Disneyland, who were asking if an earthquake had just occurred, or who were asking for the time of day. Those are not emergencies. Dispatchers can't send for assistance if they never receive the call.

911 is not an information line. Local governments have limited resources and few dispatchers. Many localities have info lines—for example, 311 or 511. I encourage individuals to look up their local police departments and have their nonemergency police numbers on hand. I also encourage them to add that information to their cell phones so that the number is readily available when they have emergencies.

I can give you many examples of when people have dialed 911 from a cell phone and the dispatcher does not have the accurate location. Imagine if you were in the middle of having a heart attack and if you were not able to voice your location. Having that local telephone number is important because your call would be expedited to the local paramedic or to the local police department that has jurisdiction over where you may be.

It is never too early to teach kids about the proper uses of 911. You never know when an emergency will happen, and your child may be the only one who is able to get help. Teach children how to dial the number and stay on the line and when they should and shouldn't dial 911. One bad example is when my children were looking for me. They knew at the time that I worked at the 911 center. They dialed 911 and asked for their mom. That is not a true, good 911 call. Discourage your children from making inquiries to that emergency line.

Every day, public safety dispatchers help save lives, provide comfort and reassurance, and are a critical part of our law enforcement teams, but, too often, their work goes unrecognized. When you need a calming voice to guide you through a crisis, when law enforcement, fire safety, and rescue personnel

are in need of seamless coordination at a moment's notice, when every second counts, they are on the other line. 911 dispatchers are the unsung heroes of the first responder community.

I want to share with you another story of a 911 dispatcher:

I had to make sacrifices as a soldier to serve my country, and I have to make sacrifices as a dispatcher to serve my community. I knew this when I chose this profession—we have to be on call; we have to work overtime; we have to work holidays; we have to work nights; we have to work weekends; and we have to be reachable 24/7, and it is tough.

I spent most of my life in the service of others—22 years in the military, 8 years with the Texas Youth Commission, over 2 years in Iraq assisting military forces, and nearly 8 years as a 911 dispatcher. I can't remember how many life events I have not been a part of because I was working, sacrificing, in order to help others. It is only tolerable and manageable with the assistance of my fellow team and family members helping me when I just couldn't get through it without their help.

We have committed ourselves to this calling, and we are very good at it. We have sacrificed ourselves in the service of others because someone had to do it.

That came from Richard Dulin of the Coleman Police Department.

The first thing he said when I answered the phone was: "I just shot myself in the heart." Given that he was still speaking, I figured he probably didn't hit his heart, but the point was pretty clear. I established that he had, in fact, shot himself in the chest about 30 minutes before he had dialed 911. He waited to call because he was not sure if he wanted to live.

Unfortunately, we don't tend to get a lot of closure, so I have no idea if he lived or died.

Kyle from Kitsap County, Washington.

The stories go on and on, and I could go on and on for the rest of the time and share with you about the wonderful work that these committed people do each and every single day for our communities.

I close, Mr. Speaker, by thanking the 911 dispatchers and recognizing the hard work they do for our communities every single day.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The Speaker announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 192. An act to reauthorize the Older Americans Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 29 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, April 14, 2016, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.