

GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, the horrific mass shooting that took place on June 12 at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida, is a stark reminder of the urgent responsibility that we have to reduce gun violence in this country. This monstrous attack on the LGBT community in a place of refuge and empowerment requires us to act.

The shooter in Orlando used an assault rifle that is virtually identical to the ones used by mass killers in San Bernardino, Umpqua Community College, Aurora, and Sandy Hook Elementary School. That is no coincidence.

Out of the eight high-profile mass shootings that have taken place in the past year, seven involved the use of an assault weapon. When an assault weapon is used in a mass shooting, the number of people shot increases by 153 percent, and the number of people killed increases by 63 percent.

These are weapons of war that are designed to kill as many people as possible as quickly as possible. They belong on a battlefield; they don't belong in our communities; and I will continue to fight to reinstate the assault weapons ban.

This morning, I want to use the time that I have to talk about two proposals that the Speaker should bring up for immediate vote: no fly, no buy, and universal background checks.

This is really, really simple. If you are too dangerous to fly on an airplane, then you are too dangerous to buy a gun. But under the laws that we have in place today, someone who is on the FBI's terrorist watch list, who is too dangerous to get on a plane, can still walk into any gun store in America, pass a background check, and walk out with an assault weapon or any other gun he wants. In fact, from 2004 until 2014, more than 2,000 suspected terrorists bought firearms legally in this country, and they are going to continue doing so until we stop them.

Until 9/11, bombs were the weapon of choice for terrorists looking to strike the United States; but in the 15 years since then, 95 percent of terrorist deaths that took place in the United States resulted from gunfire.

It is impossible—impossible—to understand that House Republicans have now voted 13 times to block the no fly, no buy proposal that Congressman PETER KING and Congressman MIKE THOMPSON introduced to keep guns out of the hands of terrorists in this country. Why? What are they afraid of? That we might actually stop a terrorist from passing a background check before he buys an assault rifle at Cabela's?

Bring the no fly, no buy bill to the floor today. Let's have an up-or-down vote. Let the American people hold us accountable for where we stand. This should be a no-brainer.

More than 80 percent of Americans believe we should prevent suspected terrorists from buying a gun, and more than 90 percent of Americans believe that a background check should be required on every firearm sale so we can keep guns out of the hands of criminals and those with such serious mental illness that possessing a gun would make them a danger to themselves or others.

Bills are pending to fix our background check system and to require a background check on every gun sale. This is one of the single most important and effective steps that we can take to reduce gun violence in this country.

Right now, anyone can go to a gun show or get on the Internet and purchase a gun without a background check. As many as two out of every five firearm transactions today are conducted without a background check. It is too easy for a criminal, a domestic abuser, a terrorist, or someone with a serious mental illness to buy a gun through this loophole.

Every day, background checks block 171 attempted purchases by felons, 48 attempted purchases by domestic abusers, and 19 attempted purchases by fugitives. It is critical that we strengthen the background check system and require checks on all firearm sales so we can keep more dangerous individuals from acquiring these deadly weapons. Bring the Fix Gun Checks Act to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, we held a moment of silence last week for the victims in Orlando. I know that all of us have kept the victims and their loved ones and the people of Orlando in our thoughts and prayers since June 12. But the best way to honor the lives lost in this horrific tragedy is to do something to prevent it from happening to others. A moment of silence is not enough. We need a moment of sustained action in this Chamber, and we need it today.

Mr. Speaker, it will be an insult to the victims of this shooting and their families and every victim of every shooting in this country if we continue to do nothing to prevent future tragedies. Do not let this Chamber adjourn until we have voted on these critical issues. Bring these bills to the floor today. Nothing is more important than stopping the bloodshed and ensuring the safety and security of our constituents.

□ 1030

THE SENATE SHOULD PASS H.
CON. RES. 129

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

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of H. Con. Res. 129.

To do so, let me share a story about a constituent of mine who is a Holocaust survivor from Lithuania. She was 11 years old when the German SS Nazis

marched into her town and gathered her and her family up. She was separated right away from her family, and, I guess fortunately for her, she did not appear Jewish to the German soldiers.

When she was asked her name, she told them it was Weber, which happens to be my name and the way my grandfather would have pronounced it when he came over from Germany on the boat in 1903. Anyway, the soldier thought she wasn't Jewish, so he let her go.

She ran into the forest, Mr. Speaker, and she hid in barns and other places until the end of the war. She spent the years of that war hungry and frightened but somehow managed to survive. She was liberated by the Russians at the war's end.

This woman, who was a young girl when she was 11 back during World War II, is now in her 90s and living in my district in her home in Galveston, Texas. Mr. Speaker, she is in need of 24-hour care to remain in her home. Unfortunately, funds are running low to keep her in her home, with the high cost of providers. She is unable to stay there, it looks like.

She lives on Social Security, but fortunately the Claims Conference has been able to assist her through providing funding by the German Government for 25 regular hours a week and some exceptional hours a week provided on her increasing healthcare needs.

Additionally, the Jewish community of Houston, through the generosity of a private fund which assists Holocaust survivors, through case management efforts of Jewish Family Service in Houston, has also been able to provide up to 59 hours a week of home care above that which the German Government has funded.

As of June 1, 2016, Mr. Speaker, the Jewish Family Service in Houston has not been able to continue this level of care.

She and other constituents of mine who are Holocaust victims would all greatly benefit from increased funding which is included in House Concurrent Resolution 129, asking the German Government to provide that funding for that very home care. This would ensure that those Holocaust survivors are able to remain in their homes with dignity for the remaining few years of their life.

Thankfully, H. Con. Res. 129 passed—with bipartisan support, I might add—in the House last week. I encourage our counterparts in the Senate to pass this legislation swiftly. Mr. Speaker, you know I am right.

CALLING FOR A VOTE ON BEHALF
OF THE VICTIMS

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I am ROSA DELAURO from the State of Connecticut. I represent the Third Congressional District.