

Colorado, were inundated with phone calls from people saying: "What can we do? We so desperately want something to happen."

This is what I said then, and this is what I say now: We cannot stop until we pass commonsense gun safety legislation.

What does this mean? Well, for starters, you would think Congress, both sides of the aisle, both sides of the Capitol, could say, if you are on a terrorist watch list, you should not be able to buy a gun. Surely we can stipulate to that.

You would think that we would agree with the vast majority of American people, Democrats and Republicans, people all around the country, that people should have thorough and sufficient background checks before they can obtain a weapon.

You would surely think that we would allow the Federal Government to conduct research on gun safety so that we would know, as a matter of public health, what we need to do to keep our children safe in their schools, our children safe on their street corners, and in their school yards.

You would think, beyond that, that we could have a rational discussion, not marred by the very powerful gun lobbyists, saying: What can we do to make sure that somebody, for whatever reason they might have, doesn't get an assault weapon and walk into a theater and kill scores of people with a high-capacity magazine in just a few minutes? You would think we could do that, and I am hoping that we will do that. I am hoping that the tide has turned.

Today, we will take up mental health legislation that was developed in my committee, the Energy and Commerce Committee. It is a bipartisan bill. I worked hard with Chairman MURPHY and Chairman UPTON on this bill, and also with the Democrats on our side of the aisle, Congressman PALLONE and Congressman GREEN and others. It is a good bill, but it is just a first step.

We need to do a lot more with mental health in this country and, beyond that, we need to do a lot more on gun safety. Nobody should assume that this bill we are voting on today is a substitute for a rational, thorough, bipartisan conversation on gun safety.

I look forward to taking the terrible tragedies that we have seen the 20 years I have been in Congress and to dedicating commonsense gun safety legislation to all those lives that were lost.

PURSUE COMMONSENSE GUN VIOLENCE LEGISLATION

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, when I arrived home last night, I found this note; and I won't say the name of the family who sent it, but I will just briefly read a bit of the content.

"Dear Congresswoman DeLauro, thank you for standing up for gun legislation. My three kids and I traveled from Westport, Connecticut, to D.C. today to support all those who are taking a stand. I hope my children remember that our government will speak up for those who can't and protect those it serves."

Stand up and protect. That is the oath of office that we take. That is what our job is. And I rise today to urge my colleagues across the aisle to pursue commonsense gun violence legislation.

We need to vote, to vote on legislation that makes an impact on the epidemic of gun violence in this country. The people of this great Nation are demanding a vote, and we have a moral obligation and a responsibility to take action.

We need to move a no fly, no buy bill, one that actually prevents potential terrorists from getting dangerous weapons, and 85 percent of the American public supports this legislation.

When we were elected to serve, we were charged with the responsibility, the responsibility to give constituents, our constituents, a voice in Washington, D.C. They are crying out for action, and if we do not provide that action, what were we sent here to do?

I say very frankly to the American public, if we are not addressing this need, send us home. Send us home.

But our work cannot stop just with no fly, no buy. We need to address the issue of universal background checks. I would go a step further. I would ban assault weapons. I think we need to hold gun manufacturers accountable for crimes committed with their guns.

I believe we need additional mental health resources, and to fund mental health programs sufficiently so that people get the help that they need. And we need to conduct research on gun violence.

For each of us, it is personal. In every community in this country the effects of gun violence have left scars, scars that are never going to heal. Again, in my State, in Connecticut, we know how devastating this can be.

After the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary, we lost six incredible, caring adults and 20 beautiful children, and we said, never again. Yet, since Sandy Hook there have been hundreds of gun deaths in Connecticut, brothers, sisters, children, babies.

The same story is true across our country, on the streets of our cities every day, in movie theaters, in churches, in nightclubs, in safe havens. The massacre in Orlando was one of the deadliest shootings in American history. Forty-nine people at the Pulse were killed; wounded, 53.

I would just like to take a moment to remember just one of them, Kimberly Morris, though her friends called her K.J. She was from Connecticut and she worked at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando. She had recently moved from Hawaii to Orlando to help care for her mother and her grandmother.

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Friends said she always wore a smile.

A former basketball teammate of K.J.'s from Post University in Waterbury, Connecticut, said that K.J. was "the sweetest person—I don't think I've ever seen her upset. What I would say is that she had a happy soul."

She was only 37 when she was murdered at Pulse nightclub. Her death and the deaths of the other 48 people who were killed in this atrocious hate crime have left a void that cannot be filled for their families, for their friends, for the LGBT community, and for the American people.

The victims' families do not get a break from grief, so we will not take a break until we get a bill—a bill with concrete, enforceable measures that will stop the killings. We must bring comprehensive, commonsense gun violence prevention measures to the floor of this people's House and reject measures that fall short of the standards this country deserves. It is the very least that we can do for the families who suffer grief that most of us will never understand. That is what our job is. That is what you elected us to do, to protect people, to protect the American people.

Not one more death, not one more empty moment of silence followed by inaction. The American people deserve concrete gun violence legislation. They deserve to know that their elected officials are standing up for them and protecting them.

GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask that you talk to the Speaker of the whole House, PAUL RYAN, and let him know that we are not going away and this subject on gun violence is not going away. We have had too many people killed, too many people maimed, and too many people traumatized to not take up a vote on two commonsense pieces of legislation.

The first one is no fly, no buy. No fly, no buy. If you are on the terrorist watch list, you can't get a gun. The second is universal background checks to make sure that people with dangerous mental instability, domestic violence, and felons can't get a gun.

These are two very simple and straightforward bipartisan pieces of legislation. They have got to come up for a vote. We are not going to go away. We have had too many killings.

Like DIANA DEGETTE, I represent the Denver area. We are no stranger to mass shootings.

I am going to read the names of the kids and the teacher killed at Columbine and the names of the people killed in the Aurora movie theater so that their deaths are not in vain and

that we actually take up some legislation instead of the Republican majority continually ducking the conversation:

Rachel Scott, 17.
Daniel Rohrbough, 15.
Dave Sanders, the teacher, 47.
Kyle Velasquez, 17.
Steve Curnow, 14.
Corey DePooter, 17.
Cassie Bernall, 17.
Daniel Mauser, 15.

I was just on a telephone townhall with Daniel Mauser's father last week talking to my constituency about gun violence. Columbine happened in 1999, and 17 years later you can hear the pain in that father's voice about that death.

Matt Kechter, 16.
Kelly Fleming, 16.
Isaiah Shoels, 18.
John Tomlin, 16.
Lauren Townsend, 18.

All were cut down just as they were beginning the prime of their life.

Then the Aurora movie theater 4 years ago, July 20—4 years ago. Have we had one hearing since then, Mr. Speaker? Not one. Not one. Not one vote, not one hearing.

Jonathan Blunk, 26.

A.J. Boik, 18.

Air Force Staff Sergeant Jesse Childress, 29.

Gordon Cowden, 51, a father protecting his kids in that theater.

Jessica Ghawi, a reporter.

Navy Petty Officer Third Class John Thomas Larimer, an expert in cyber security for the Navy.

Matt McQuinn, 27, died protecting his girlfriend.

Micayla Medek, 23.

Veronica Moser-Sullivan, 6.

Alex Sullivan, 27, again, saving his girlfriend.

Alex Teves, 24.

Rebecca Wingo, 32.

We can't keep this up. We want a vote. We did something unprecedented last week by having a filibuster in the House, which turned into a sit-in, to make our voices heard that this can't keep going on.

We all had a good friend, Gabby Giffords, shot in a mass shooting in Tucson, Arizona, 5½ years ago. Have we had one hearing? No. Have we had one vote? No.

We are asking for two things, Mr. Speaker, two votes. That is it. It is common sense: no fly, no buy and universal background checks. We are not going away. This subject is not going away. We want a vote.

GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, once again, we are on this floor, many of us just asking—just asking—Congress to do its job, just asking Congress to act.

Just a few minutes ago, an American woman was standing right here on the

steps of our Capitol—your Capitol, America—and she was talking about how she has never talked publicly about the incident that took her 10-year-old daughter's life, about a man who should not have been able to buy a gun.

He went online and bought a 9-millimeter handgun. He came to her home, broke into the backdoor and said that he was going to kill her. She ran for her 10-year-old daughter to flee from this man, and in the process, she was shot, and so was her daughter. She told the gruesome story about how her daughter died in her arms—her 10-year-old little girl.

But, ladies and gentlemen, that is the story of 32,000 families every year in our great Nation. Many of you may be thinking: Well, I live in a small town somewhere where everybody knows each other; that is not going to happen.

I am sorry. It happens everywhere.

Some people might think: Well, that just happens in the big cities like Chicago.

I am sorry, ladies and gentlemen, it happens in every ZIP Code around the country.

We are less safe today, ladies and gentlemen, than we have ever been in America. Today, there are more weapons—firearms—in America than there are people. More than 320 million Americans live in our great Nation, and there are more than 320 million guns across America.

There are reasons why we are less safe today than we have ever been before in America, and it is not because of terrorists. It is because Congress refuses to act.

Let me give you an example.

In 1996, the United States Congress banned the Centers for Disease Control from studying gun violence and also said that you will not—you shall not—give our best minds in our greatest universities the grants they would need to actually find out why are so many people dying. What are the reasons why that is happening? So Congress refuses to be informed. Congress literally, on this issue, has chosen to remain ignorant on purpose, and that contributes to 10-year-old little girls who die because a man went online and bought a gun and there were no background checks.

Most Americans believe that, for God's sake, a background check is sensible. Why not? But yet Congress refuses to have a vote on the floor of this House so that we could debate that issue and then vote it up or down.

Every Member of this House who runs for office utters the words, "public safety is my number one issue." I do, and so does every person who runs for office. Every person who gets elected to this House of Congress gets elected for a 2-year term. That means that, in the time that we get sworn in on the floor of this prestigious House, by the time we run for office—and if we are fortunate enough to get elected again—

more than 60,000 Americans will die due to gun violence in those 2 years.

That doesn't make sense. I would hope and think that we are electing people to do sensible things, to do things the right way, and to do things that are right for America that will keep us safe. All we are asking for, ladies and gentlemen, is to have a vote on sensible laws that would help keep our streets safer.

I announced on this floor that I am now a grandfather. It is such a beautiful feeling. But in my lifetime, my children's lifetime, and now in my grandson's lifetime, our streets are not safer.

Ladies and gentlemen, let's demand that our Speaker allow a vote on sensible gun legislation in this House.

GUN VIOLENCE

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago today, I sat down right there on this floor next to JOHN LEWIS. Gathered around were House Democrats demanding a simple demand: that we have a vote on two bills that would make our streets safer from gun violence.

Last week when I went home, I stood with hundreds of people on Federal Plaza in Chicago demanding the very same thing. We sat down as we stood up for gun safety.

Right now, hundreds of people are outside, some standing on the steps, 91 of them wearing orange T-shirts, representing the average of 91 Americans killed by guns every day in the United States of America.

I am from Chicago, and just last night, NBC News ran a story on gun violence in Chicago, titled, "City Under Siege." Over the Fourth of July weekend, 50 people were shot in Chicago. Three of the victims were children, including two young cousins, 8 and 5 years old, who were shot while celebrating with their family. On one street, someone put a handmade sign that read, "Don't shoot kids at play."

The stories of children caught in the middle of the ongoing gun violence epidemic are seemingly endless.

Just last week, D'Antignay Brashear was walking down the street in Chicago with her 4-year-old son, Kavan, when he was shot in the face. Speaking about the shooting the next day, D'Antignay said: "He was with me. He was holding my hand." She thought he was safe.

We cannot accept the status quo when children are unsafe walking down the street holding their mother's hand.

Kavan survived. But his mother said: "How am I going to explain to him when he looks in the mirror and sees his face?" I wonder, how do we explain to Kavan and his mother that this House refused to take action to prevent this from happening to him or to any other child?