

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