



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 162

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, JULY 11, 2016

No. 111

House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MEADOWS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

July 11, 2016.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MARK MEADOWS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2016, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my constituents' demand that Congress act to prevent gun violence.

Following yet another devastating shooting, the House has spent more than its share of moments engaged in contemplation. We have had plenty of times to pause and reflect. We have had more than enough moments of silence. The time to be silent has passed. Now it is time to act.

My colleagues and I held a sit-in here on this House floor 3 weeks ago to de-

mand a vote on solutions to gun violence. We were not engaging in some kind of stunt. We were not seeking publicity. We were speaking for the American people who have simply had enough. They have had enough gun violence, they have had enough moments of silence, and they have had enough carnage and devastation.

The Orlando shooting was the latest in a seemingly endless series of horrific mass shootings that have shocked us all, all of which we agree in hindsight were committed by people who should not have had access to a gun. The individual in Orlando had committed horrible acts of violence against his ex-wife. He exhibited such derangement and rage that he frightened classmates and coworkers. He was even investigated as a potential terrorist by the FBI. He was, in nearly every respect, the very last person we would want to be able to have a gun, walk into a gun store and legally purchase an assault weapon, a Glock, and a massive amount of ammunition.

He did not violate any laws in the purchase of these weapons because the laws we have are not good enough. Doing nothing is not rational. It is madness, it is folly, and it is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, the American people expect and deserve real action, not toothless half measures engineered to silence the people trying to solve this problem. Please, no more games and no more inaction. Just give us a vote on real reform.

Last night, in the middle of the night, I found myself wondering why doesn't the Republican leadership let us have the vote on no fly, no buy and on expanded background checks?

After all, House Republicans have 247 votes; House Democrats, only 188; and not every Democrat might even vote for these bills. With the 59-Member majority, the Republican pro-gun position would certainly prevail.

Or would it? How many moderate Republicans in swing districts might ac-

tually vote against their constituents' desires or vote for their constituents' desires?

We cited polls again and again that 85 percent of Americans don't want people on the terrorist watch list to be able to buy guns, and 90 percent of U.S. citizens want to close the background check loopholes.

This is what political scientists call a tough vote. Vote for your constituents and you are in trouble with the NRA. Vote your conscience and you are in big trouble with the Republican leadership. And if you toe the NRA line, the most extreme position, you can be sure your Democratic proponent will let all voters know this fall that you voted with the terrorists.

Yes, a tough vote. Do what is right and moral and sensible and just, and you are in political trouble. Do what PAUL RYAN and the NRA want you to do and you are in political trouble. This is why the Republican leadership will do anything they can to keep from having a House vote on these issues.

But isn't this why we are here? To make the tough votes? To follow our conscience? To do what is right, damn the political consequences? At the very end of our careers, will the poets write verses about the thousands of easy votes we cast?

Neither party has a monopoly on wisdom or truth, but let's have the debate. Let our people argue and persuade and vote and be brave enough to live with the choices we make.

GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I take the floor today to continue the discussion that we started in this House about gun violence.

Something extraordinary took place here in the House of Representatives.

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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