

We had Members on this side of the aisle, Democrats, who came to the floor and who sat on the floor in the well of the House. That was extraordinary. No one has ever seen this happen before.

Why did this take place? How is it you can get every group in the Democratic Party to basically join in an action that had never taken place before? What am I talking about?

I am talking about the Women's Caucus, the Black Caucus, the Progressive Caucus. I am talking about all of those in our Democratic Party who do not always agree with each other. We work at it, but we have serious and credible disagreements. However, you did not hear any denouncement from any of our Democrats about what we were doing.

Why did we do this, and why did we have basically so much support for what we did?

When I say "support," I am not simply talking about Democrats. I am talking about people who left their homes, their businesses, and their workplaces and joined us outside. They even stayed for hours in the rain to say to us: Thank you for finally giving voice to this problem that we have in this country on gun violence.

The Members of the Democratic Party and those people who were outside basically said: We are sick and tired of the influence that is exerted by the gun lobby.

You have the NRA that owns too many Members of Congress and who can tell them what to do. There are Members who are intimidated by the gun lobby and the NRA. So what they do is they hide behind the Constitution and they will tell you that they are defending their constitutional rights.

None of us, in what we sat in about, talked about taking away anybody's guns. What we said was we have got to make sure that guns are not in the hands of people who should not have them; people who have committed crimes; people who have committed murder; people who have shown that perhaps something is wrong with them psychologically or emotionally. We should not make it easy for these people to have guns.

What should we do about it?

We have two very simple bills, and we begged the Speaker of this House to allow us to take up those bills, to debate those bills, to have them voted up or down.

Well, the Speaker won't do it. The Speaker won't do it because, as it has been described, he, too, is a handmaiden of the gun lobby, along with all of the other Members afraid to come and represent and to deal with the tough issues that confront us.

What were those bills all about?

One is very easy to explain: no fly, no buy.

What does that mean?

It simply means that if you are on a list that says you can't get on an air-

plane because you are dangerous, we know something about you that will not allow us to allow you to get on an airplane where you may commit an action that could endanger the lives of everybody on that plane and others even on the ground, no fly, no buy.

Why should we sell guns to somebody who we have said are too dangerous to fly on the airplane?

That is all we wanted on that bill, was a vote to say: Yeah, that makes good sense. If you cannot fly, you should not be able to buy.

What is wrong with that?

That is very simple.

Why can't they take up that bill? Aren't they concerned about who gets on the airplane?

Yes. But if you are concerned about who gets on the airplane, you should be concerned about who is able to buy a gun.

The other bill is just as clear, just as simple: universal background checks. We need to know who is buying these guns. Somebody will say: Don't we have something about background checks in the law?

Ladies and gentlemen, we are not covering what is on the Internet. We are not covering the fact that these gun shows are selling guns out of the back of their cars. They don't know who the people are. They don't care who they are, and they walk away with guns, and they go out and they kill people with them.

GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, our Nation has endured a harrowing week, which has affected each and every one of us.

Senseless and tragic violence, mass shootings, and shootings of those who have sworn to protect us have become part of our daily dialogue. We are forced to cope with the loss of family members, friends, our neighbors, and the fracturing of our communities as a result of gun violence in our country.

My district is no different. Stockton, California, endured the Nation's first mass school shooting in 1989. A man opened fire at Cleveland Elementary School, killing 5 children and injuring 30 students and teachers. It was a senseless act of violence that prompted the California State Legislature to ban assault weapons.

This law helped pave the way for a Federal ban on assault weapons. Unfortunately, Congress gave in to pressure from the gun lobby and let the law expire in 2004. Today there are only six other States and the District of Columbia that have such a ban.

This past Saturday, a man gunned down in central Stockton became the city's 25th homicide of 2016. In the U.S., more than 10,000 Americans will likely be killed by gun murders this

year. Another 20,000 lives will likely be lost to suicide. The total number of gun deaths and violent injuries will be close to 100,000. The victims who make these headlines are just as important as the ones that don't.

But there is a brighter side to this story. In my congressional district, as well as in others around the country, there has been a real concerted effort to unite community services, law enforcement, neighborhood leaders, and others to work together to address acts of violence. Although this effort has brought people together and helped focus the community to reduce violence, constant vigilance and peaceful involvement remains needed.

Are there achievable changes to our gun laws within the Constitution that would make a difference?

Absolutely.

Should we, as Congress and the U.S. House of Representatives, work on behalf of our people we represent to take actions?

Yes. Absolutely.

America's poor and minority populations are disproportionately impacted by gun violence. A November 2015 ProPublica article noted that half of American gun death victims are men of color in poor, segregated neighborhoods.

If we really care about our citizens, we should be taking concrete steps to curb gun violence with responsible legislation, such as expanded background checks, a ban on assault weapons, a ban on felons and domestic abusers from owning guns, and gun safety features and safety training.

No one solution will completely solve the problem, but if something like expanding background checks to all gun sales will help keep guns away from dangerous people and save lives, wouldn't it be worth it?

Many Members of this body have heard the call of action from our constituents and took to the House floor in a peaceful, yet meaningful way. We have taken the call to action and joined our constituents at events in our districts. We speak each day, and we will continue to speak about what is needed to change the cycle of violence plaguing our Nation.

It is my hope that just as many folks in our communities strive to reduce all acts of violence that Congress will learn from them. We need a real dialogue about the challenges we face and what it will take to reduce violence in our communities. While such actions might seem difficult or impossible to achieve, we must join together in that pursuit and work toward a peaceful Nation.

Mr. Speaker, not only do we have a responsibility here in Congress, but the citizens and the residents of this country have a responsibility, too. To those contemplating violence, you are hurting yourselves and the people you care about. Nonviolence takes more courage and achieves so much more.

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WE NEED TO CLOSE THE LOOPHOLE

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

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart. Our country is grieving. Innocent lives have been lost. Some of those were the brave public servants, public safety servants who were sworn to protect us. Families have been forever changed by the loss of a loved one, and concern and frustration have visited every corner of our country.

As we move forward from last week's tragedies and work together to build a better nation and a brighter future for every citizen, let us remember that, as Members of Congress, each of us has a unique opportunity to effect meaningful change. We have the opportunity to pass legislation that can help put an end to gun violence that claims the lives of more than 30 Americans every day.

We can't continue to stand by and allow this epidemic of gun violence to continue devastating our communities. Whether it is in a movie theater, on a college campus, at an elementary school, in a church, in a nightclub, or on the streets of our cities, far too many innocent lives have been cut short by someone using a gun.

Let me give you some numbers:

3½—the number of years since the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School;

34,000-plus—the number of people killed by someone using a gun since Sandy Hook;

1,196—the number of mass shootings in our country since Sandy Hook;

31—the number of moments of silence observed by this House for victims of gun violence since Sandy Hook;

525—the number of days the House has been in session since Sandy Hook; and, most sadly

Zero—that is the number of times we have voted on gun violence prevention legislation on this floor.

Think about that; 34,000 people killed by someone using a gun, and the lives of their loved ones forever changed.

One of the 34,000 people killed by someone using a gun since the tragedy at Sandy Hook was a 10-year-old girl named Samantha. Her mother, Catherine, was brave enough to share her story last week on the steps of our Capitol. Catherine and her 10-year-old daughter were shot by a man who couldn't pass a background check, but because of a glaring loophole, he was able to buy a gun online without having to pass a background check. He used that gun to shoot Catherine and to kill Samantha.

My bipartisan, pro-Second Amendment bill, H.R. 1217, would close this loophole and require a background check for all commercial gun sales, including those online, at gun shows, and through classified ads.

Background checks are our first line of defense when it comes to stopping dangerous people from getting firearms. We know that they work. Every day, 170 felons are stopped from buying a gun because of a background check, and 50 domestic abusers are stopped from buying a gun because of background checks.

Everyone says they want to keep guns away from dangerous people, but the only way to know if someone is dangerous is to conduct a background check. Without background checks, how do you know if a person buying a gun is a criminal or dangerously mentally ill? If the man who killed Catherine's daughter hadn't been able to easily bypass the background check by going online, Catherine's tragic story may have been different. It is long past time for the Republican leadership in this House to give us a vote on H.R. 1217.

Just as important for the safety and security of our country and fellow Americans is H.R. 1076, bipartisan, pro-Second Amendment legislation to prohibit those on the FBI's terrorist watch list from being able to legally purchase firearms.

This debate isn't a choice between respecting the Second Amendment or reducing gun violence; it is about this Congress doing both.

Mr. Speaker, give us a vote.

CONGRESS MUST STEP UP AND DO ITS JOB

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, last week we all woke up to the horrific news of violence in Baton Rouge, in Falcon Heights, and then the terrible events that unfolded in Dallas, where members of their police department were gunned down protecting individuals who were actually standing up to protest. The police officers stood between them and a dangerous person with a dangerous weapon, and many—five members—lost their lives.

This week we mark 1 month since the worst mass shooting in the history of our country. An act of hate, an act of terror that ended 49 lives. That is 49 friends, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, sons, and daughters. They left behind communities of people who will never be the same without them.

One of those 49 was Tevin Crosby of Saginaw, Michigan, in my district. Tevin was just 25 years old. He was on a trip visiting family in North Carolina and then went to Florida to see some friends and colleagues. He was a young businessowner, a rising star, according to his friends. An employee at his company told the Saginaw News that Tevin was always smiling, always positive.

This pattern of violence can't be ignored. It demands change. We are better than this. We can do better than this. In this body, in this House of Representatives, we must do better. No one

piece of legislation would prevent every shooting, but if it could prevent one, we should act.

Three weeks ago, I joined my colleagues on the floor of this House as we sat down to stand up and say that we had had enough. We demanded, and continue to demand, a vote on commonsense legislation to prevent gun violence.

When the majority adjourned in the middle of the night and went home, we didn't stop. We took our message to every corner of the country. At home in Michigan, I joined with my congressional delegation, my Democratic colleagues, to meet with our constituents and talk with them about what more we can do in Washington to prevent gun violence.

I heard Michiganders talk about what that sort of violence means in their own neighborhoods. Gun violence happens in mass shootings like we saw in Orlando, but it also occurs every single day across our country. In cities like my hometown of Flint, we see gun violence every single week on our streets, in our neighborhoods.

It is our duty in Congress to keep Americans safe and to work toward decreasing gun violence back home. Our constituents are literally dying because it is too easy for dangerous people to get their hands on a gun, and we have a moral responsibility to act.

I have been inspired by the people back in Michigan. I met with moms and dads, sons and daughters, sisters and brothers, faith leaders, elected officials, law enforcement officials, and community activists. They have all come together, joined their voices, calling for a vote on commonsense legislation to prevent gun violence.

When we go home, people are asking: Why aren't you voting to make sure suspected terrorists and dangerous criminals can't buy a gun? Well, the reason is simple. It is because the Republican majority is held captive by the gun lobby. It is that simple. The fact that they are petrified of a single organization keeps them from acting. We are sick of it, and we are not going to stand for it.

What we are asking for, what we are demanding, is a vote on just two commonsense pieces of legislation that have the support of more than 80 percent of Americans. People in Michigan have made it clear they want Congress to act, and I am sure this is true all across the country: act to prevent suspected terrorists from buying deadly weapons; act to make sure that, if a person purchases a gun, they should have to go through a background check no matter how they purchase that weapon.

We can't just express our grief on the floor of this House and then not act on real, meaningful action to prevent gun violence. We must step up as a Congress and do our job and pass strong, smart legislation that will keep our country safe.