

opportunity to work within the confines of the Second Amendment to pass legislation that will reduce gun violence and keep our communities safe. Responsible gun owners across our country understand that. It is time for the Republican leadership in the House to understand it, too.

Mr. Speaker, give us a vote.

HONORING THE LIFE OF NICHOLAS "CORKY" DEMARCO

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

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, on Friday afternoon, I was deeply saddened to hear about the passing of one of West Virginia's finest gentlemen, Nicholas "Corky" DeMarco.

A lifelong West Virginian, Corky was a leader in our State, in both private and public service. For those of you who did not have the privilege of knowing him, let me tell you a little bit about him.

I got to know Corky through our discussions about how West Virginia can benefit from our natural bounty. Under Governor Cecil Underwood, Corky served as the director of operations for the State and helped bring more jobs and industries to West Virginia.

Most recently, Corky served as the executive director of the West Virginia Oil and Natural Gas Association. During his time with the association, he more than tripled their membership and made significant contributions to the oil and gas industry in West Virginia.

His devotion to growing jobs in our State was strong, but his love for family came before anything else. For Corky, the most important thing in life was his family: his wife, Catherine; two grown sons, Matthew and Joey; and his stepson, Jason Milano.

I join all West Virginians in keeping Mr. DeMarco's family in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. Corky will be truly missed.

OPIOID ADDICTION

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, overuse of prescription pain medication is one of the leading causes of opioid addiction. When a patient has more narcotic pain medication than they need after a medical event, this excess medication can fall into the wrong hands.

Narcotic pain medication in the wrong hands often leads to addiction. In fact, the National Institute on Drug Abuse has found that 1 in 15 people who take nonmedical prescription pain relievers will try heroin.

Last year, the number of fatal overdoses from prescription painkillers increased by 16 percent—and 28 percent from heroin—in the United States. In West Virginia, the story is even worse. According to a recent study by the Trust for America's Health, the Mountain State has the highest rate of overdose deaths in the entire United States.

This issue is above party politics. It is a plague that all Americans must come together to solve. That is why, in February, I introduced H.R. 4499, the Promoting Responsible Opioid Prescribing Act. This bipartisan bill strikes a harmful provision of ObamaCare that places unnecessary pressure on doctors and hospitals to prescribe narcotic pain medication.

This concern was brought to my attention while meeting with doctors and other healthcare professionals in Charleston, West Virginia, who are active in our State's medical society. I thank them for bringing this to my attention. It is a perfect example of how government works well. You bring an issue to your Congressman's attention, and he takes action to solve it.

This was their idea. I thank them for bringing it to our attention. I encourage everyone to bring the ideas you have to help fight back against the opioid epidemic to your local Congressman.

I am proud to say that, less than a week ago, the Department of Health and Human Services announced they are implementing the important policy changes contained in my bill. Almost word for word, the new rules are exactly what my bill says need to be done.

Since I first introduced the PROP Act in February, I have been calling on Congress to pass my bill. This bipartisan legislation has 27 Republican cosponsors and 16 Democratic cosponsors. My bill puts doctors, not the Federal Government, in control of opioid-prescribing decisions. This change in policy is an important fight against opioid abuse.

I want to thank the 43 cosponsors in the House and the 8 cosponsors in the Senate in our successful effort to pass this bill's policies through regulation and help put an end to opioid abuse.

LET'S PUT AN END TO GUN VIOLENCE

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

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Speaker, our Nation has been repeatedly confronted by senseless and tragic acts of gun violence; and now our country grieves with yet more heartache following the shocking and horrific attack in Dallas last week, an attack that took place during a peaceful protest where citizens were exercising their basic rights as Americans, as Dallas police officers supported and protected this fundamentally American right.

As President Obama said: "There is no possible justification for these kinds of attacks or any violence against law enforcement."

This event added to an already heartbreaking week, after the deaths of Philando Castile in Minnesota and Alton Sterling in Louisiana. Today, I am thinking of their families, friends,

and loved ones, as I am of the 49 lost at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando just a month ago.

I believe that law-abiding citizens have a constitutional right to own firearms, whether for sport or personal protection; but I also know that responsible personal freedom and public safety are not mutually exclusive.

Shootings have become unacceptably commonplace in our country, and Congress has a responsibility to do more to keep guns out of the hands of criminals, domestic abusers, and the dangerously mentally ill. In fact, recent polls show that support for universal background checks hovers around 90 percent.

No other developed country in the world has the same rate of gun violence as the United States. According to United Nations data, the gun homicide rate in our country is more than 7 times that of Sweden, 6 times that of Canada, and, unbelievably, 21 times that of Australia.

As President Obama stated, following the shooting in Oregon: "We are the only advanced country on Earth that sees these kinds of mass shootings every few months."

I agree with Dallas Police Chief David Brown when he said that police departments cannot be expected to solve our Nation's gun violence problem by themselves. As policymakers, we must be doing more. We should all be inspired by Chief Brown's commitment and willingness to work through personal heartbreak toward a more just and violence-free society.

Chief Brown's urgency is echoed in letters I have received from young people in my district. Headlines in our communities and those that make national news do not go unnoticed by our Nation's youngest citizens, children who are growing up with heightened fear, some even afraid to go to school.

Abbey, age 13, from Gardner, Massachusetts, wrote to me: "Every single day at school, I am scared an armed intruder will come in," going on to say that "the amount of gun violence in our country is piling up, and we need to stop it."

Andrew, a high school freshman from Dracut, wrote: "I have been noticing there are more shootings lately, maybe because I am getting old and paying more attention to what is happening around me than I did before." Imagine, at 14, he is feeling old as he watches our news.

Miriam, from Acton, wrote: "I am only 17 years old, so this current climate of fear and violence is all I have ever known. However, I know that this amount and frequency of bloodshed is not and should not be normal."

As a mother, grandmother, and American citizen, it is unconscionable that our children and grandchildren are growing up in a world where they see mass shooting after mass shooting, met only by a moment of silence on this floor.

Mr. Speaker, in Congress, we have a moral responsibility to pursue change.