

year. That is unacceptable. That is why Chairman MILLER's bill is needed. We need to protect the VA and those who go to it—the veterans who need the service. That is why I ask all, when we bring the bill up, please support it.

GUN VIOLENCE

(Mrs. NAPOLITANO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on gun violence.

Two-thirds of gun deaths are suicides, but rarely part of the conversation. These deaths are not inevitable. Allowing Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to research this, along with doing universal background checks, can and do save lives.

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. It is time for advocates to share stories of hope and to find solutions to self-harm. We must educate ourselves and our neighbors on signs and symptoms of depression to reduce suicide by gun.

Further work is needed. We must promote gun safety without stigmatizing those with mental illness. Congress must work to keep guns out of the hands of people who should not have them: domestic abusers and individuals with violent histories like assaults.

This is too important. We must act now. No longer can we tolerate it.

STRENGTHENING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

(Ms. STEFANIK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, in my district, industries ranging from manufacturing to renewable energy production to mineral production regularly tell me about the need for a trained and qualified workforce. When I visit with students and families across my district, I hear about how eager workers are for these advanced opportunities.

Over the past 2 years, I have visited many of the BOCES, CV-TEC, and P-Tech programs throughout my district and know how critical the training they provide is to preparing our students to compete in a 21st century economy.

This is why I was proud to work with my colleagues on the Education and the Workforce Committee to pass the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act. This bipartisan bill will help equip students with the skills and experience they need to find jobs that will lead to long, fruitful careers by encouraging more local control and flexibility.

I am pleased that the House overwhelmingly passed this important legislation, and I urge the Senate to pass it and send it to the President's desk.

VOTE ON GUN LEGISLATION

(Ms. ESTY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve and the American people demand a vote on commonsense, bipartisan gun safety legislation.

During the 7 weeks that Congress was in recess, thousands of Americans were killed by guns. Each one of those Americans was precious. They had family, loved ones, coworkers, and neighbors. In the 3 years and 9 months since 26 people were killed in my district—20 first-graders, six teachers and educators—we have had not one debate, not one vote on this legislation.

The time has come. The time is now. We demand a vote.

VA ACCOUNTABILITY FIRST AND APPEALS MODERNIZATION

(Mr. PITTENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTENGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5620, the VA Accountability First and Appeals Modernization Act, of which I am a cosponsor.

We owe our brave veterans a debt we can never repay. As a small token of our gratitude, we have the privilege of providing veterans with appropriate care and benefits. Too often, the care provided at the VA expresses the opposite of gratitude and does not demonstrate the privilege of serving veterans.

This legislation promotes accountability by allowing incompetent VA employees to be fired for poor performance or misconduct. This legislation will also help the thousands of veterans stuck in the appeals quagmire by providing veterans more options in the appeals process.

Restoring accountability and transparency at the VA should not be a political issue. I urge all my colleagues to join me in support of H.R. 5620.

GUN ACTION THREAT OF CENSURE

(Ms. HAHN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, it has been almost 3 months since I joined JOHN LEWIS and my Democratic colleagues right here for a sit-in on the House floor to demand a vote on commonsense gun violence legislation.

Instead of letting us vote, instead of confronting this issue, Speaker RYAN and my Republican colleagues left town. Now we are back in session, there is still no talk about holding a vote, but there is a lot of talk coming from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle about punishing us for protesting on the House floor.

I hope they do. But I am not going to apologize for what I did. I am proud

that I did something to try to save lives.

I think they should apologize to the American people because they have not allowed us to vote on commonsense gun violence legislation. I think they should apologize, but they continue to do the bidding of the gun lobby. And I think they should apologize that, during our 7-week recess, 2,015 Americans were shot and killed.

My Democratic colleagues and I took action. They continue to sit on their hands.

□ 1215

LITTLE KIM WANTS WAR WITH THE UNITED STATES

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, "This is not directed at Japan. The nuclear development is toward the United States," said an adviser to North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un.

Frankly, Little Kim makes his father look normal. His saber-rattling regime has once again attempted to fire intercontinental ballistic missiles. Meanwhile, the administration is naively pursuing a strategy they call "strategic patience." In layman's language, that means "doing nothing."

This hopeless appeasement policy has not worked. The North Korean plan is to launch nuclear missiles from submarines at the United States. Isn't that lovely?

The rogue state's belligerency has put the entire region at grave risk of aggression, nuclear proliferation, and war.

Historically, North Korea, like Iran, was a state sponsor of terrorism. Eight years ago, the United States withdrew the designation when North Korea lied and promised to halt its nuclear program. But North Korea continues to develop nukes.

Strategic patience is a blissfully ignorant failed foreign policy. North Korea must have consequences for its aggressive and belligerent actions. Time to put Junior Kim's regime back on the State Sponsors of Terrorism list, because he is a terror to world peace.

And that is just the way it is.

GUN VIOLENCE

(Mr. MCNERNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to discuss gun violence facing our citizens and police.

Law enforcement officers and first responders across the country are faced with difficult and often unpredictable situations on a daily basis that require careful response to ensure public safety. That is why I introduced H.R. 5864.