

I thank my colleagues for their work on this important issue, and I hope many others will join us in supporting this bill to help our LGBT senior communities.

ATLANTIC COAST YOUNG MARINES

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

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the United States House of Representatives to join me in recognizing the Atlantic Coast Young Marines and their hard work during Red Ribbon Week.

The Florida regiment of Young Marines has performed more than 50,000 service hours since last October, with more than 35,000 hours of community service dedicated to our veterans.

As you can see, the Atlantic Coast Young Marines and their fellow Young Marines throughout Florida are very active in their local communities.

Reduction of drug demand is a major issue of the Young Marine program, and Red Ribbon Week is an excellent opportunity to recognize the Atlantic Coast Young Marines' emphasis on this mission.

Red Ribbon Week is the oldest drug prevention program in the Nation, reaching millions of Americans during the last week of October each year. By wearing red ribbons and participating in community antidrug events, Young Marines pledge to live a drug-free life and pay tribute to DEA Special Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena.

Special Agent Camarena was a veteran of the DEA assigned to Guadalajara, Mexico, where he was on the trail of the country's biggest drug traffickers. Because he was so close to unlocking a billion-dollar drug pipeline, he was kidnapped and murdered by drug traffickers. His tragic death opened the eyes of many Americans to the dangerous illicit drug trade.

Red Ribbon Week celebrates Agent Camarena's life and his vision for a drug-free America.

Last week, the Atlantic Coast Young Marines honored his life through events that helped reduce the demand for drugs throughout northeast Florida.

These young men and women who participate in this education and service program are known to be excellent leaders inside and outside of the classroom. The Atlantic Coast Young Marines are a shining example of our First Coast youth.

They also serve our veterans in numerous ways, by cleaning yards, making hospital visits, and simply writing cards. Their dedication to community service and our veterans is a shining example of noble selflessness.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the Atlantic Coast Young Marines for their service to Florida's First Coast community.

GUN VIOLENCE IN LAS VEGAS

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

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because we do have a gun violence epidemic in this country, and the time to act is now.

Exactly 1 month ago today, we witnessed one of the most horrific mass shootings in our country's history, and Congress has done nothing. One month later, legislation on bump stocks has stalled. There is a deafening silence from the majority on any responsible actions on this public health crisis, even though, Mr. Speaker, a majority of Americans, including responsible gun owners, support responsible gun safety legislation.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I rise to share a statement written by my constituent Zach Elmore, who is here with us this morning. Zach's sister, Alicia Johnson, was shot in Las Vegas. Thankfully, she survived. This is what he wrote as he sat next to her hospital bed as she recovered:

"My sister was shot in Las Vegas. I have never been more afraid, more angry in my entire life. The problem with shootings around the country is that, unless you know someone directly affected, it is easy to say 'what a tragedy,' and move on with your daily life.

"It is not so easy when you are getting ready for bed and one of your sisters calls inconsolably crying to tell you that another one of your sisters has been shot. It is not so easy when you call your mother and she is terrified and crying and all you can do is try to calm her down while you figure out how to get to your sister as quickly as possible. It is not so easy to see your brother-in-law with blood still on his hands from doing whatever he could to keep your sister alive. It is not so easy to see your sister in a hospital bed, unable to move due to a gunshot wound in her back and staples in her stomach from surgery to check for organ damage. We are among the luckiest ones.

"I am sick and tired of thoughts and prayers. If thoughts and prayers had any affect whatsoever, there would be a lot of people still alive today. All these thoughts and prayers would have miraculously pulled bullets out of victims and healed wounds, would have stopped these massacres before they started.

"You know what is better than thoughts and prayers and lines around the block at blood banks and enormous relief funds for victims of tragedy? Creating a society where we don't have to do these things many times a year.

"We waited so long to do anything after Columbine that Virginia Tech happened. We still couldn't talk about it when the Aurora theater shooting happened. That didn't change anything, and then 20 children were murdered at Sandy Hook. Even that wasn't enough to promote change. When Dylann Roof happened, still couldn't

talk about it, and then San Bernardino happened. We still couldn't bring ourselves to discuss gun control, and then the Pulse nightclub shooting happened.

"Lord knows we can't do anything about guns, and then Las Vegas happened. And we are still being told that now is not the time, let healing begin, don't politicize tragedy, but by all means send thoughts and prayers to all affected by 'insert massacre here.'

"There is no place in society for any weapon which has the singular purpose to kill people. The man who killed and injured more than any massacre in America's history broke the mold for who commits mass shootings. He would have easily passed a background check and psych evaluation. He was affluent and had no known ties to terrorist organizations, but he is certainly a terrorist. The system we have in place allowed him to accumulate dozens of assault weapons and thousands of rounds of ammunition because, for all intents and purposes, he was not a risk to society.

"Let's keep in mind, the Second Amendment of the Constitution was written over 200 years ago when a good gunman might get three shots off a minute with a musket. It is hard for me to believe the Founding Fathers envisioned a world where one man could or would fire 400 rounds a minute into a crowd of people.

"This should not be difficult. How many people have to die before people will apply a little logic to gun laws? Do more children need to die? Does a hospital need to be attacked? What is your limit? Does it have to happen to you or a loved one before you start to think differently about gun laws?

"The people of this country have so much power. We have protested, pressured our Congressmen and -women, and we have seen that work. Why can't we do the same to reduce and hopefully eliminate the insane amount of gun violence in America?

"Excuse me for not being willing to wait to let healing begin, for not accepting that now is not the time to talk about a major problem in this country. There is never a wrong time to stand up for what you think is right.

"My sister was shot in Las Vegas in the latest of a devastatingly long line of mass shootings in this country. We are luckier than 58 people and their families, and likely luckier than many of the over 500 other people who were injured. If I don't talk about it, if we don't truly take steps to effect positive change, everyone reading this will forget it happened because they will be sending thoughts and prayers to the victims of the next mass shooting in America."

Mr. Speaker, that is the end of the excerpt of his letter. Zach's family's experience illustrates why it is crucial for us to take a hard look at gun violence policies.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that we will, across the aisle, in a bipartisan fashion, do what is right for the American