

in and introduced me to the Sandy Hook Ride on Washington also known as Team 26. Team 26 is an organization of twenty-six cyclists and activists who every year, ride together from Newtown, CT, to Washington, DC, in order to honor the twenty-six lives lost in the Newtown School Shooting, raise awareness of gun violence, and the ever-growing need for common sense gun legislation. His participation in this ride and my discovery of it opened my eyes to many things regarding the topic of gun violence.

Firstly, it got me thinking about my own town's vulnerability to this ever growing issue. I had grown up believing that my town was immune to the epidemic of gun violence. But with my new outlook on the conflict, I found that it has become increasingly difficult, almost impossible to still confidently say this. I realized that no town in our country is more or less likely to experience these types of tragedies.

Also, I thought about how gun violence and other forms of mass violence had affected my childhood. Seemingly endless lock-down drills, news stories of 'another shooting,' and hearing my peers discuss what they would do if they were ever in a scenario such as a school shooting. I knew that no one should need to worry about their safety or think about how they would react in public places during an avoidable tragedy like this. I felt strongly about this and wanted to make a difference.

Through watching the men and women who rode their bikes from Newtown, CT, to Washington, DC, stop along the way to hold rallies, call people to action, and spread hope wherever they went, I saw ways I too could make a difference. The following year, I rode with Team 26, and I witnessed the rallies at which many of the family members and friends of people who had lost their lives to gun violence spoke about their experience.

During our rally in Trenton, we heard members of Mothers Demand Action speak about the loss of their sons and daughters, we learned exactly how it felt to have someone you love so dearly taken from you forever due to a strangers ease of access to a firearm.

Here, in Morristown, we met and rode with a mother whose life was turned upside down by a man who discharged a firearm in a mall, seriously hurting her, and killing her fifteen-year-old daughter!

Listening to these people speak helped me discover the real reason I was there.

I was riding with Team 26 to be a messenger.

We were listening to these people speak first-hand about when their loved ones were taken by another person with a gun and how it felt and affected their lives.

We took these peoples' experiences and stories to the elected officials in the states we visited and in our nation's capital to educate them on what is really going on in their country.

It is so easy to be unaware of how often shootings occur as most shootings go unreported and therefore are quickly forgotten by those not involved. But for the friends and family whose friend, child, or sibling had been taken from them, any of these occurrences are life changing.

We ride to ensure that no life gets forgotten.

We ride to educate our lawmakers about gun violence beyond the statistics, to show them not only the numbers, but who those numbers represent and the heartbreak and sorrow they live with.

We ride to encourage these lawmakers to begin making change.

To urge their peers to stand up with them against gun violence.

To vote for common sense gun laws such as mandatory background checks, banning as-

sault rifles and bump-stocks, and helping to make mental healthcare more accessible and accepted nationwide.

Team 26 shares many of its goals with the hundreds of other organizations and groups who are currently battling the nationwide epidemic of gun violence now more than ever. We all must now come together as one group and refuse to be silenced.

We must continue to organize these events and never stop making noise until our representatives get it.

Until they understand that gun violence is not a problem that is going to fix itself and that the citizens they represent are relying on them to become part of the solution.

In order to convince our representatives that the voice of many is more powerful than ever, we must never give up and become an active part of our society. You can do this in countless numbers of ways.

If you are seventeen or older, make sure you are registered to vote.

If you are eighteen or older, make sure that you do vote.

No matter what your age is, you can get involved and make your voice heard. In fact, you already have by attending this event and hopefully attending more in the future to show that we will never go away.

Unfortunately, it is unlikely this will be the end. But we must all make a continuous effort to keep the pressure on and to fight for what is right. Without the power of the people, this conflict will never have a solution.

So we must press on, ride on, never give up, and pledge to being the generation that will create the place where this will never happen again.

IN RECOGNITION OF H.E. AMBASSADOR VASILIOS PHILIPPOU

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 22, 2018

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to His Excellency Ambassador Vasilios Philippou as he ends his tenure as High Commissioner and Consul General of the Republic of Cyprus in New York City.

Ambassador Philippou has dedicated his entire adult life to serving his country. As a young man, Ambassador Philippou served in the Cypriot National Guard. He began his career in at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1991. His postings in foreign service include serving as Consul General in New York; High Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus to Antigua, Barbuda, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago; a Counsellor on Economic and Multilateral Affairs; and as an Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Mexico.

Ambassador Philippou has been awarded the International Good Scout Award from the greater New York Councils of Boy Scouts of America and has been honored by the Cyprus Children's Fund, a nonprofit which provides scholarships to Cypriot students to attend University abroad. He is also an Honorary Fellow of the Foreign Policy Association of New York.

Throughout his tenure in New York, Ambassador Philippou displayed tremendous dedication to improving the U.S.-Cypriot relationship. He has been named the next High Commissioner of Cyprus in Ottawa, Canada, and I am confident that in that role, he will build upon

his already-impressive record of public service.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing H.E. Ambassador Philippou's amazing dedication to public service and his tireless work to strengthen the long friendship between the Republic of Cyprus and the United States of America.

IN RECOGNITION OF SERGEANT DAVID QUINN FOR HIS SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY DURING WORLD WAR II

HON. ANN M. KUSTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 22, 2018

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor United States Marine Corps 1st Sergeant David Quinn of Temple, New Hampshire for his service and sacrifice to our country during World War II.

Sgt. Quinn gave his life on November 20, 1943, during the amphibious assault on Tarawa, an island atoll located in the Gilbert Islands. What became known as one of the "toughest" battles in Marine Corps history, the Battle of Tarawa was 76 hours of intense fighting with Japanese defenders, and it claimed the lives of approximately 1,000 Marines and sailors, including Sgt. Quinn at just 24 years old. But the tenacity and unwavering commitment displayed by Sgt. Quinn and his fellow Marines helped lead the Americans to victory in the battle two days later.

For decades, Sgt. Quinn's family believed his body had been lost at sea, never to be recovered and given a proper burial. That all changed when his nephew Paul Quinn was contacted by military scientists, who said they had positively identified Sgt. Quinn's remains. Last month, nearly 75 years after his death, Sgt. Quinn finally came home to New Hampshire and received a funeral with full military honors, bringing much needed closure and peace to the Quinn family.

On behalf of New Hampshire's Second Congressional District, I express my deepest gratitude to Sgt. Quinn for his service and for making the ultimate sacrifice in defense of the freedoms we hold so dear. I thank his family for seeing him through until the end and for keeping his memory alive, and I share their relief over his return home. I will continue working to ensure our brave veterans receive the respect, dignity and services they deserve.

IN RECOGNITION OF SADETE MUJOVIC

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 22, 2018

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the remarkable achievements of Sadete Mujovic, an educator who is making a difference in the lives of her students and a leader in the Muslim American community who is developing wonderful after-school programs to encourage children to reach their full potential. I am delighted to recognize her remarkable contributions at a