

When asked if they felt that using social media will contribute to conditions that can result in school shootings, 73 percent of the students said “yes.”

Now, to be clear, I am not saying that social media is the sole cause of shootings or suicides, but these statistics are statistics that should shock everyone. Recent findings say revenge is a strong motivation for school shootings and that among students, homicide perpetrators were more than twice as likely as their victims to have been bullied by peers.

These are more than just statistics. They are the reported experiences of our Nation’s children on a daily basis, both in and outside of school. So this is an example of a problem that clearly could and should be addressed and that our society surely has the means to deal with.

Some organizations are stepping up to do just that. Bully Bully is a Cincinnati-based firm that was created out of a disconnect that the founder noticed between widespread bullying in our schools and the often reactive, largely ineffective ways of addressing that harassment.

Bully Bully is developing an anonymous reporting app that not only allows students to provide information regarding antagonistic situations, but also assists school administrators in analyzing and addressing these incidents and supporting victims of harassment.

Bully Bully’s stated goal is to never allow another incident of intimidation or harassment lead to a school fatality or suicide. What they are saying is: Here is a problem. It might be a factor in violence, and I think we have the means to stop it. So here is a solution. Let’s try it.

In my experience, Mr. Speaker, there is rarely a simple solution to a public health crisis. You need to try multiple solutions across multiple fronts. Physical or verbal intimidation may be a facet of this public health crisis that we haven’t paid enough attention to but ought to.

I am glad we have Americans like those in my Ohio district who are willing to try and solve part of a large problem. Evidence has suggested that students who get harassed by their peers tend to grow up more socially anxious with less self-esteem and require more mental health services. Hundreds of thousands of students skip school each day out of fear and anxiety.

It may be a more pervasive problem than we think, actually. Recent research by Screen Education on 12- to 16-year-olds at Camp Livingston in Bennington, Indiana, found that students were largely happier by being deprived of their smartphones. They were more engaged and connected to one another as people when removed from the cyber world of drama, gossip, and aggression.

Instead of being forced to react to student violence when tragically nec-

essary, perhaps we should focus on equipping the adult who spends all day with these students with the means to support and guide them.

Let’s keep looking for ways to make schools safer for our children and maybe, just maybe, we can make the school experience better and safer for our children as a result.

WORKFORCE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

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

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on a topic that should continue to be in the forefront of our agenda here in Congress: workforce training and development.

Before coming to Congress, I owned and operated a small construction company in Lancaster County, and when we worked to expand our footprint in central Pennsylvania and sought out new markets to expand the business, we faced a serious problem: Many times, there just simply were not workers available to fill the jobs that we needed to fill in order to expand. Qualified or trained workers were just simply unavailable.

Just recently, I met with half a dozen of the Nation’s largest staffing agencies. They told me today that this has reached crisis proportions. They are seeing companies all across the country being faced with the same problem that I was faced with as a business owner, and companies now are making decisions on where to locate new facilities, where to expand based on the available workforce in that area. Sometimes, that is offshore rather than right here in America.

I have seen the skills gap firsthand. I have managed through it, understood the impacts of it, and so now, in Congress, I am working to try to fix it. One of the best ways that we can lift people up, improve their standard of living, and create more opportunity is to connect them with a good-paying, family-sustaining job. Let’s be honest: the best antipoverty program is a job.

Right now, our economy is booming, consumer optimism is rising, and American manufacturing has risen in each of the last three quarters. We have sustained economic growth, and jobs are being created all across the country. In fact, there are roughly 6 million jobs available right now.

Ways and Means Chairman KEVIN BRADY said it best when he said, recently: “We have gone from a nation that asks, ‘Where are the jobs?’ to one that asks, ‘Where are the workers?’”

One of my priorities in Congress has been to work to expand opportunities for work-based learning, where individuals get real experience from real professionals as they are learning.

I was very happy to see the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act just came

back from the Senate. We will be, hopefully, passing that onto the President’s desk this afternoon.

There is additional work that we can do; therefore, I have introduced additional legislation that will continue this effort. H.R. 5153, the USA Workforce Tax Credit Act, would address the urgent need to ensure that current and future American workers are prepared for the jobs available in today’s 21st century economy.

By establishing a new Federal tax credit, this legislation would encourage donations for community-based apprenticeship programs, career and technical education, workforce development, and educational preparedness, and it would encourage partnerships with companies looking to sponsor these programs.

Encouraging investments in organizations and programs that are preparing our workforce for the jobs of today means that more people will be connected with a job. It means more families will be improving their standard of living. It means that people will thrive off the dignity that jobs provide.

But it is really more than just an investment in workforce training programs. It is an investment in the American people.

There are so many different paths to obtaining a good-paying job. I have my own experience of running my construction company during the day while I was taking college courses at night. I never did quite obtain that bachelor’s degree, but I gained the skills necessary for my industry.

My experience isn’t that different from so many people in this country. I know firsthand that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to finding a good job or helping others get connected with one. We have to ensure that our educational system is preparing workers to succeed in the 21st century. We have to invest in our people. I believe that this legislation makes a down payment and puts us on the right path.

It is my hope that Congress advances this legislation to change lives, support families, lift people up, and support our growing economy.

ENERGY DIVERSIFICATION FOR EUROPE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, America is better off. America is better off because U.S. crude exports have more than doubled since January 2017, and production is up 12 percent so far this year alone.

Since Congress lifted the 40-year ban on oil exports in 2015, U.S. producers now export between 1.5 and 2 million barrels of crude every day. Lifting the ban has filled pipelines and sparked a surge of investment in new technology and shipping infrastructure around the United States.

□ 1130

Today, U.S. crude imports have dropped 7.5 million barrels per day, as we rely on that increased domestic production and our friends in Canada.

Lifting the ban has allowed us to be in competition with the two highest producing crude oil countries in the world, Saudi Arabia and Russia. According to the International Energy Agency, this year, the United States is expected to surpass Saudi Arabia and rival Russia as the world's leading producer of crude oil.

This comes as Germany is working with Russia on a pipeline that will deliver more than 50 billion cubic meters of natural gas from Russia to Germany. During the recent NATO summit in Brussels, President Trump was right to strategically question Germany's further reliance on Russia's natural gas.

Our liquefied natural gas and oil delivered to the Adriatic, North Sea, and Baltic seaports offer our allies in Europe strategic diversification both from OPEC and from Russian dominance for our friends in Western and Central Europe, their consumers, and their industries.

Mr. Speaker, America is better off. I commend President Trump for raising this important issue on his recent trip to Europe, and I am proud of our work in Congress to enhance America's global energy leadership.

RECOGNIZING DR. DAN TULLOS

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a good friend and a key figure in education and communication sciences in Arkansas, Dr. Dan Tullos.

Dr. Tullos recently retired from Harding University, where he served since 1979 as a professor, program director, and chair of the Communication Sciences and Disorders Department. Under his guidance, the communication sciences and disorders program has grown from a major offered under the oversight of the Department of Communication to a separate department with two undergraduate majors and a graduate program.

Throughout his career, Dan has been honored by his colleagues, students, and industry leaders with well-deserved recognition and awards. Most notably, he was the 2015 recipient of the Frank R. Kleffner award, which recognizes an individual's outstanding contributions to communications.

For his devotion to youth development, education, scouting, and a better world that has improved the lives of countless individuals across Arkansas and the globe, I congratulate Dr. Tullos on his great career and his retirement.

HONORING PAT DOWNS

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an outstanding leader who has transformed the realm of nonprofits in Arkansas, Pat Downs of the United Way of White County.

Pat retired earlier this year as the executive director of the organization

after 29 years of service. Her selflessness, passion, and work ethic inspire all who collaborate with her in White County, around the community, and in the workplace.

Helping raise more than \$11 million for associated agencies, Pat's decades of leadership had an indelible impact on central Arkansas. I thank Pat for her outstanding service to the United Way and send best wishes for her future endeavors.

SOCIALIST POLICIES SABOTAGE VENEZUELA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS) for 3 minutes.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, the United States was founded on the fundamental principles of individual liberty and that all are created equal. As the late President Reagan once said: "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction."

We see this sad truth in nations around the world. So many live under the dark shadow of oppression. They are called captive nations.

I was recently introduced to a young man with big dreams named Tito. He is from Venezuela, and he is currently pursuing his master's at Washington State University. Life is tough in Venezuela, and it became very difficult for him when he was going through a routine checkup and found that his white cell blood count was too high. Unfortunately, he wasn't properly diagnosed because the healthcare system is woefully inadequate. Even help had been denied.

It wasn't until he was able to fly to Houston to have a bone marrow test and was diagnosed with leukemia that he got the help that he needed.

Once, Venezuela was not only the richest country in South America, it was one of the top 20 richest countries in the world. Today, it is one of the most economically oppressed. The IMF is reporting that inflation could top 1 million percent by year's end.

Chavez and Maduro have managed to sabotage this once vibrant and prosperous democracy with socialist policies, corruption, and authoritarian rule. Chavez once said that he was "convinced that the path to a new, better, and possible world is not capitalism. The path is socialism."

Today, in that new world, the government is telling its citizens to eat their own pets, lest they starve to death. What was once a vibrant cultural center and top tourist destination is the crime capital of the world. The average citizen has lost 20 pounds. Instead of a better world, there is a refugee crisis, and millions are fleeing to neighboring countries.

The promises never materialized, and the people are suffering, people like Tito.

Maduro's stubborn pursuit of socialism is hurting millions. Of course,

Maduro would not be able to cling to power were it not for Cuban support. And then you have other countries like Nicaragua ruled by the tyrant Daniel Ortega, where we have seen the elimination of the freedom of press and suppression of habeas corpus rights.

We, as Americans, must stand in solidarity with people who long to be free. We must support legislation like the Venezuelan Humanitarian Assistance and Defense of Democratic Governance Act that passed the House overwhelmingly last year.

We must have a strategy to help the people of Venezuela. We must do more to ensure that authoritarian regimes do not have the financial capacity to keep oppressing their people.

This story has been repeated throughout history where socialist leaders rise to power, offering promises that are never kept. The people suffer.

It is a reminder of why America is so unique. The fruits of our labor belong to us, we the people, not the government. That is why freedom is so important.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Lasky, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 2278. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide grants to improve health care in rural areas.

S. 2779. An act to amend the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 36 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CURTIS) at noon.

PRAYER

Right Reverend Bishop Irinej Dobrijevic, Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Eastern America, New Rochelle, New York, offered the following prayer:

Lord God Almighty, God of justice, we offer You our sincere thanksgiving and heartfelt prayer for and with those whom You have graciously vested in governance of these United States of America.

Enable the Members of the House of Representatives, elected by the people and for the people, to present equitably the diverse interests of our citizens and those from the expanse of the world who reside, labor, and study here.