

Unfortunately, as the President recognized, himself, this national emergency could be tied up in the courts for years with no guarantee that judges will rule in favor of the wall to be built. It is Congress' job to provide the resources our Nation needs to keep us safe, and I am concerned that if this is tied up in the courts, we will be stuck with the status quo of no wall and a border that isn't secure.

My vote to disapprove of this unilateral executive action had nothing to do with the merits or need to build President Trump's wall; it was about our Constitution and this body's exclusive Article I powers to make laws and use the power of the purse.

I spoke out strongly when President Obama said that if Congress didn't act, he would use the pen and the phone, and then he proceeded to act alone on DACA and act alone in reappropriating money within ObamaCare and regulating every mud puddle in America.

Remember, President Obama initially said he couldn't act alone on DACA because he wasn't a king or an emperor. After a robust debate in Congress, he flip-flopped and took executive action. His executive action took away Congress' authority to act, and DACA still isn't solved.

These unilateral actions by President Obama put more power in the hands of unelected people sitting in cubicles in Washington, D.C., and they turned elected Representatives into elected bystanders. When Representatives become irrelevant, citizens become irrelevant, and we the people are powerless against faceless, unelected bureaucrats.

Unilateral executive actions set bad precedent. If it is okay for the executive branch to act alone after the legislative branch doesn't reach an agreement, where does that take us?

Governor Jay Inslee already has said that he would be willing to declare a national emergency on climate change allowing for drastic Federal action that would never have to be approved by Congress.

What if, without any congressional approval, a future President used a national emergency to take money from our VA clinics, Fairchild Air Force Base, or force management at the Colville National Forest to force a Green New Deal on the American people?

Whether it is at the border or upholding the separation of powers in our Constitution, we, conservative Republicans, must be consistent about being the party for the rule of law. It is those principles that define us.

Mr. Speaker, I say to Speaker PELOSI: I am 100 percent with Trump on the wall. I am also 100 percent with the Constitution. As Representatives of the people, it is our call to put aside any personal ambition or partisan divides so that the people are protected.

This isn't about political parties, personalities, or power. It never has been. It is about making sure that the prom-

ise of America is never breached and knowing that the only ones who can preserve it are we the people. I take this seriously and will always lead by upholding my Article I constitutional authority to be a strong voice for those I have the privilege of serving in the United States House of Representatives.

GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Ms. SHERRILL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SHERRILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in this Chamber today in support of H.R. 8.

Americans have been waiting for Congress to catch up to them. It isn't often that we hear that 70, 80, or 90 percent of Americans agree on something, but when it comes to universal background checks, 97 percent of Americans think it is a good idea.

In my own district, I have seen that unity. After Parkland, we had 13,000 people in Morristown, New Jersey, at the student-led March for Our Lives demanding gun safety legislation. After the horrific shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue, members of the community came together to denounce gun violence.

The 11th District of New Jersey understands that universal background checks are a responsible way to address the gun violence epidemic in this country. It is a way to keep our communities safe.

Here in New Jersey, we know that successful, responsible gun ownership looks a lot like the legislation we have on the books. We have good gun safety laws, but they are constantly undermined by States with weak gun safety laws.

As a Federal prosecutor, I worked on cases where we traced illegal guns to neighboring States with weak gun safety laws. That is why it is so important that we have stronger Federal gun safety laws. Gun violence is a national problem, and it deserves a national response.

Mr. Speaker, I grew up in a culture of gun safety. My father is a hunter, and he taught me how to shoot. I went on to serve in the United States Navy, and I was qualified as an expert shot in the M16, the Colt 45, and the 9-millimeter Beretta.

I am joined today by a fellow freshman veteran, the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania, and we have been trained and know the power of these weapons and the damage that they can do. Universal background checks are an easy step that we can take to improve gun safety in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. HOULAHAN).

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from New Jersey for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today also in support of H.R. 8, and I rise to tell the

story of one resident from my community, from Pennsylvania's Sixth Congressional District, Jamie Loeper, and his parents, Liz and Joe, from West Chester, Pennsylvania.

Jamie had just graduated college and was looking for a permanent postcollege job. In the meantime, he was working in a pizza shop in West Philadelphia when his life was tragically cut short in January 2004 when a worker accidentally shot him. This was not done in malice but was the result of a coworker accidentally mishandling a gun. Jamie passed away when he was 22 years old. Today would have been his 38th birthday.

I rise for the 1,600 Pennsylvanians and nearly 40,000 Americans who have lost their lives to gun-related incidents in 2017 alone.

The Loepers, like mine, are a military family. We understand the values of responsible gun ownership but also that we must take commonsense steps to reduce gun violence in our communities. We have seen for far too long far too many gun-related tragedies over the past several years with Congress doing nothing. We must act now.

SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

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

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House overwhelmingly passed the Natural Resources Management Act, including a provision sponsored by Senator FEINSTEIN and me that would establish California's first National Heritage Area, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area.

I want to thank my House colleagues from California, Representatives MATSUI, DESAULNIER, MCNERNEY, THOMPSON, HARDER, LOFGREN, and BERA, for their support as cosponsors of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Act, H.R. 357.

I also want to thank Chairman GRIJALVA of the Natural Resources Committee for bringing the bipartisan public lands bill to the floor of the House following Senate passage earlier this month.

I sponsored this legislation to establish the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area since 2011 along with my colleague Senator FEINSTEIN.

A National Heritage Area designation will help conserve the California Delta, which I have had the great pleasure of calling my home for the last 40 years.

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This iconic working landscape is central to California's life and is the most productive watershed and delta in the Western United States and, indeed, from the coast of Alaska to Chile.

Specifically, this legislation authorizes \$10 million in Federal grants for