

GUN VIOLENCE

(Ms. DEAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DEAN. Mr. Speaker, for decades, lobbyists have stifled our national conversation about gun violence and Congress has refused to act.

Since Parkland, Thousand Oaks, and so many others, new voices have broken through. Student activists have marched, organized—alongside moms—and insisted that we take their safety seriously.

This week we do just that, by passing H.R. 8 and H.R. 1112. This will be a sea change.

And it shouldn't be controversial. Mr. Speaker, 97 percent of Americans support background checks—that is Democrats and Republicans—including 94 percent of gun-owning households.

Six years ago, I was there when the Pennsylvania House Judiciary Committee held its first hearing on background checks.

In her courageous testimony, Sandy Hook mother Francine Wheeler described losing her son Ben. She said:

When this happens to you—when my child was murdered, I no longer have the fear to stand up and to say what is right and what I believe.

And then Francine asked a crucial question:

If we all agree dangerous individuals shouldn't have guns, then shouldn't we at least take the most basic steps to make sure they don't?

I look forward to the passage of these bills.

RECOGNIZING DELEGATES OF THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a very impressive group of individuals visiting the Capitol this week.

Delegates of the National Center for Learning Disabilities have traveled from all over the country to advocate for themselves and their peers.

When it comes to learning, each of us must deal with our own unique challenges. These young people face some particularly difficult obstacles, including dyslexia and dysgraphia, which interfere with the brain's ability to interpret information.

But they have not let these obstacles prevent them from doing great things. They have persevered, working hard, not just for their own success but for the future success of others.

By traveling to Washington to share their stories and discuss opportunities for governmental and societal change, these young adults have demonstrated deep commitment to the community of those who have learning disabilities.

I admire their dedication and hope to use my role as co-chair of the Congressional Dyslexia Caucus to help them in these efforts. May they be encouraged to keep up their great work.

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(Ms. WEXTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WEXTON. Mr. Speaker, several years ago, I had a conversation with one of my constituents that I think about often.

She told me about when she sent her 5-year-old son off to his first week of kindergarten in the Loudoun County Public Schools. He came home from school one day, and he told her: Mommy, we had an emergency drill today. My place to hide is behind the backpacks.

Like a backpack is going to stop a round from an AR-15.

And she decided right then and there that we need to do better for our kids and that she needed to do something. Her way of doing something was to start the Loudoun chapter of Moms Demand Action.

Now she and millions more like her have sent us here to do something about gun violence.

We may not be able to stop every school shooting, every act of gun violence, but shouldn't we at least try to stop some? Because if we won't do that we shouldn't be here.

Today, for the first time in decades, the United States Congress will vote on meaningful gun violence prevention legislation. We will vote on and pass H.R. 8, the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019, and I will proudly vote "yes" because these checks will save lives.

HONORING OLYMPIC CHAMPION BARNEY EWELL

(Mr. SMUCKER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Black History Month to honor an Olympic champion and truly one of the greatest athletes my district has ever produced: Mr. Henry Norwood, otherwise known as "Barney," Ewell.

Mr. Ewell was born into poverty and grew up in Lancaster. He attended McCaskey High School and later went on to attend Penn State. He served his country for 4 years, from 1941 to 1945, during World War II.

He became known as the fastest man in the world after he broke the world record for the 50-yard dash in 1940. He went on to win one gold and two silver medals at the 1948 Olympics in London.

I know people who still recall cheering on the streets in Lancaster City after Barney Ewell returned from London, having won the medals for our country and for our community.

Mr. Ewell was an inspiration to Lancaster City, and it is an honor to highlight his story today.

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

Ms. SHALALA. Mr. Speaker, in June 2016, a gunman opened fire in the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida, killing 49 people, including Jerry Wright, a Miami Heat fan who loved to dance.

Jerry Wright's parents, Fred and Maria, know that their son's death was preventable but, more than that, that it was not unusual.

Nearly 40,000 people die because of guns every year, and that is why Fred and Maria lead the local Moms Demand Action group in my district. I am so proud to learn from them and work with them on commonsense gun safety in Miami-Dade and around the country.

By mandating universal background checks for every gun sale, we can be a step closer to ensuring that, when our children go to school, to concerts, to movie theaters, to clubs, they do so safely, they do so without worrying that this dance might be their last.

Fred and Maria Wright aren't asking for an overhaul of the Second Amendment; they are just asking for the adoption of commonsense solutions.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join us in preventing firearms from falling into the wrong hands by supporting H.R. 8.

EMERGENCY DECLARATION

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

Mr. DESJARLAIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support President Trump's declaration of a national emergency at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Sophisticated cartels—some of the most dangerous criminals and terrorist organizations in the world—are partnering with foreign adversaries, including Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, and China smuggling drugs, as well as human beings, into our country.

Mexican cartels produce or distribute the most heroin, fentanyl, cocaine, and methamphetamine here, killing tens of thousands of Americans annually.

My constituents are suffering from the opioid epidemic.

MS-13 and other violent gangs have infiltrated recent migrant caravans; however, the equivalent of a migrant caravan crosses the border almost weekly.

These forces are destabilizing and deadly to people on both sides, particularly for the less fortunate among us.

Under legal authority Congress has granted the executive branch—which Barack Obama also used to combat cartels and illegal immigration—the President, the power to declare a national emergency to fund construction of the new border barriers at dangerous weak points.

As a fiscal conservative, constitutionalist, and strong advocate for the