

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.

GUN VIOLENCE

(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.

GUN VIOLENCE

(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

military, I believe the need is clear and pressing, the law supports immediate action, and ample funding exists to address this crisis.

□ 1215

BACKGROUND CHECKS WORK

(Mrs. DAVIS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, today is a momentous day, one that makes me proud of this Chamber. After years of inaction, Congress is moving to address our country's gun violence problem.

We have seen some of the worst mass shootings in our Nation's history in just the past few years. Las Vegas, Thousand Oaks, Sutherland Springs, Parkland, Sandy Hook—these are only a few of the names that recently shocked us to the core. And, sadly, each time, Congress failed to act.

But today—today—we are offering more than thoughts and prayers. We are offering legislation. This bill has bipartisan support—finally, something we can all agree on.

Strengthening our background check system is a small but a very important first step. We simply cannot allow criminals to take advantage of loopholes.

Background checks work. They keep guns out of the hands of criminals, and background checks will save lives.

No more excuses. It is just common sense.

CLOSING BACKGROUND CHECK LOOPHOLE IS LIFE SUPPORT

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

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, selling a gun to a convicted felon, to a perpetrator of domestic violence, to a fugitive from justice, merits a jail term, but those who oppose this reasonable background check bill are enabling just that.

Someone who couldn't buy a .22 inside a gun shop can, today, go outside that shop and buy a military-style killing machine and get away with it.

Doctors Seth Goldstein and Lisa Epstein, who visited my office this very week on behalf of Moms Demand Action, and 117 San Antonio physicians, they have a view that is different from Members of Congress concerning the result of gun violence. They witness this violence in the emergency room after young bodies are torn apart.

What a different view this debate would have if it were occurring amidst the pain, violence, and blood in a hospital emergency room, because closing this loophole is about life support.

We have got to end the trauma. Let's join the doctors who are out there seeking to save lives and do our part to save lives by passing this bill.

BACKGROUND CHECK BILL

(Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, more than 500 Pennsylvanians are murdered with guns each year, causing untold suffering and tearing our communities apart. Pennsylvanians are crying out for commonsense legislation to stop the bloodshed, legislation like H.R. 8, the bill before us today.

Now, nobody thinks that universal background checks would eliminate gun violence, but the facts suggest that they would reduce it.

In 2017, the Pennsylvania State Police ran over a million background checks on would-be gun purchasers. The vast majority of purchases were approved within a few minutes. But 13,000 were stopped, and the background checks led to the arrest of 150 wanted fugitives and the arrest and conviction of 500 other individuals for illegally attempting to obtain a firearm. Those background checks put some bad guys in jail, and they probably saved some lives as well.

Let's help our police enforce the laws that keep guns out of dangerous hands. Vote for the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019.

BALANCING GUN RIGHTS WITH SAFE COMMUNITIES

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

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to take a stand in support of H.R. 8, which takes a critical first step to ensure that every person who purchases a gun undergoes a background check.

People should have the right to feel safe from gun violence in their community, including at home, at work, and at school. Unfortunately, that is not the case today in our country. Time and time again, our communities have experienced gun violence due to the absence of commonsense gun safety measures.

Only 12 days ago, five people, four of whom were my constituents, left their homes for work at the Henry Pratt Company in Aurora, Illinois, and never returned. Their lives were taken by an unspeakably horrific act of gun violence.

It is time to take immediate action to help safeguard our communities from gun violence, and today, for the first time in more than two decades, the House of Representatives will vote on a major gun safety bill, and I will support it.

H.R. 8 is a strong step toward making our communities safer, and I look forward to continuing to work on commonsense legislation that balances gun rights with the safety of our communities.

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to stand here today as we work to pass gun violence prevention legislation.

I would like to share a letter from a fifth grader constituent of mine, Alex, from Northfield, Illinois, that perfectly explains why we must pass H.R. 8 and H.R. 1112.

Alex writes: "I don't want to see innocent people dying for no reason. I want all children to feel safe at school. I want all adults to feel safe at work. I want all people to feel safe in their city. I think stronger gun laws will help and also make sure that everyone that buys a gun has to have a thorough background check."

Well, Alex, you are absolutely right, and we are about to finally ensure that everyone who purchases a gun undergoes a comprehensive background check. The next step is banning assault weapons.

This fifth grader and students around the country are telling us to do something real to make them safer, and finally, at long last, the House of Representatives will take action today.

BEER CAN APPRECIATION/ALUMINUM BILL

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

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the critical role that brewers and beer importers play in our Nation's economy.

American beverage companies and brewers employ more than 2.2 million people nationwide, providing more than \$103 billion in wages and benefits. In my home State of Colorado, breweries have become a significant component of my State's culture and economy.

But in order to compete, American beverage companies and brewers need a fair and transparent pricing system for aluminum. That is why I along with my friend, Mr. LAWSON from Florida, are introducing legislation this week giving the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission oversight authority of the aluminum market. These unfair market practices have not only cost the beverage and brewing industries hundreds of millions of dollars, they have also had harmful effects on consumers.

With the help of the CFTC, I hope we can resolve these pricing irregularities that have been plaguing the market so our Nation's beverage companies and brewers can continue to produce some of America's most popular beverages.

BIPARTISAN BACKGROUND CHECKS ACT OF 2019

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members