

We learn from the past so together we can build a better future for all citizens. As we proclaim February as National African American History Month, let us celebrate their lives, understand their adversity, and lead by their examples.

COMBATING GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mrs. TRAHAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today with a great sense of urgency.

Every day it seems as if there is another news story about a shooting in a school, a movie theater, a synagogue, or on a city block. We have lost far too many lives due to gun violence.

From my own community, I celebrate the life of Olivia Marchand from Westford, whose mother, Jody, endured years of domestic abuse. In 2010, she survived her husband's brutal attack but lost her beautiful Olivia when her husband shot and killed her and then killed himself.

This tragedy devastated our whole community. As a mother, this loss still fills me with grief and anger.

Today, Jody keeps her daughter's memory alive, educates women on domestic violence, and fights for tougher gun laws. We must answer America's call for action on gun violence, not the gun lobby's call to maintain the status quo.

Yesterday, we passed universal background check legislation, a necessary first step to tackle gun violence in America. I urge my colleagues to continue voting for these critical reforms.

OPPOSING EXTREME PRIORITIES

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

Mr. ALLEN. Madam Speaker, I rise here this morning to speak out against the extreme priorities of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle. With so many pressing issues facing the 116th Congress, I find it appalling that H.R. 1 has been reserved for legislation that completely undermines the democratic framework of our country.

Simply put, this bill is nothing more than a thinly veiled power grab through more government, more regulation, and political speech repression. To call this legislation the For the People Act is borderline ludicrous.

H.R. 1 would eliminate States' authority to set voting qualifications, restore voting rights of convicted felons even if it contradicts State or local policy, outlaw voter verification, and force taxpayers to subsidize anonymous donations even if it is for a candidate they do not support.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. H.R. 1 is not for the people but, rather, an attempt to expand power to Federal

bureaucrats and unelected Federal judges, undercutting the will of everyday citizens and the Constitution.

This is not reform. This is a shameless attempt to keep one party in power, and the American people deserve better.

GUN VIOLENCE

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

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Madam Speaker, everyone deserves to feel safe in their community, whether they are at work, at home, at school, or at church.

Less than 2 weeks 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 a horrific act of gun violence. I am committed to honoring the lives of victims of gun violence through action.

H.R. 1112 is a commonsense and bipartisan bill that will help address a deficiency in background check laws by allowing law enforcement to conduct a thorough background check. I am proud to cosponsor an amendment that will help ensure this legislation improves the safety of victims of domestic violence, domestic abuse, dating partner violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Yesterday was the first time in more than two decades that the U.S. House of Representatives passed a major gun safety bill, and today we have an opportunity to take a further step. H.R. 1112 will help save innocent lives, and I look forward to working on commonsense legislation that balances protecting our gun rights and ensuring the safety of our community.

RECOGNIZING MIKE LONG

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

Ms. STEFANIK. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the chairman of the Conservative Party of New York and my good friend, Mike Long, who has stepped down from this position after decades of service.

Mike Long was born in Brooklyn, New York, and raised in southern Queens. In 1959, Mike Long dropped out of the 12th grade to enlist in the United States Marine Corps. He felt strongly that his duty was to our country.

That commitment to sacrifice and service above self is a common thread throughout Chairman Long's life. He served on the New York City Council for a term representing Brooklyn, and he stepped up to become chairman of the Conservative Party, a position he held for 30 years, which is a testament to his character, commitment, work ethic, and determination to stand up for his principles.

He is a lifelong advocate for limited government, economic freedom and op-

portunity, constitutional liberties, and improving the lives of everyday, hard-working New Yorkers. He is one of the rare political leaders in New York who has earned deep respect from both his political allies and his political opponents.

I am proud to count him as a true friend, and I want to thank him, his wife, Eileen, and his family for his lifetime of service to New York State and the United States of America.

CONGRATULATING POLICE CHIEF LYN WOOLFORD, AMERICA'S FAVORITE CROSSING GUARD

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

Mrs. HARTZLER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Police Chief Lyn Woolford of the Ashland, Missouri, Police Department for being voted America's Favorite Crossing Guard.

Chief Woolford was recently selected the winner of a contest sponsored by Safe Kids Worldwide, a nonprofit organization that works on behalf of families and communities to keep children safe from injuries. As a result of this competition, the Ashland School District will receive \$10,000 to improve pedestrian safety.

Chief Woolford can be seen every schoolday guarding intersections near Ashland's schools to make sure that children get across the road safely, and the children—many of whom, along with their parents, voted for him online—love him.

It is not unusual to see Chief Woolford wearing colorful hats and outfits as he guides the children safely across the road. It might be a bright chicken hat or a multicolored parrot hat. No matter the hat, the mission is the same: to brighten the children's day and to see that they get to school safely.

Through his actions, the children have a community role model and a beloved friend in their local police department. Ashland Police Chief Lyn Woolford epitomizes the service of our law enforcement officials and deserves our thanks and appreciation.

Congratulations, Chief Woolford. You truly are making a difference.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF RITA SMITH-WADE-EL

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

Mr. SMUCKER. Madam Speaker, today, during Black History Month, I rise to celebrate Rita Smith-Wade-El, a leader in my community of Lancaster. Rita passed away last month, but her impact will be felt in our community forever.

She was a fierce leader on social justice issues and racial equality in our community. Her life can best be described as a life of service and a life of compassion. She served as a lector, eucharistic minister, and social justice

committee member. She was always trying to lighten the load for others and lend a helping hand.

Rita saw those in need and recognized that if she had the power to give, she would, and even if it wasn't in her power, she would try anyway.

Rita was a longtime Millersville University professor of psychology and African American studies and founded the school's African American studies minor.

I am very happy to celebrate her life today. We will miss her in our community, and we will miss her contributions to our community.

ENHANCED BACKGROUND CHECKS ACT OF 2019

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 1112, the Enhanced Background Checks Act of 2019.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 145 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1112.

The Chair appoints the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. UNDERWOOD) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

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IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1112) to amend chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, to strengthen the background check procedures to be followed before a Federal firearms licensee may transfer a firearm to a person who is not such a licensee, with Ms. UNDERWOOD in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chair, I am pleased that today we are considering H.R. 1112, the Enhanced Background Checks Act.

Yesterday, the House passed H.R. 8, the Bipartisan Background Checks Act, an important bill to expand our national firearms background check system to include virtually all gun transfers.

However, there are also steps we can take to make the current background check system more effective at block-

ing the sale of guns to individuals who are ineligible to purchase and possess them.

That is why I support H.R. 1112, a bill that addresses a dangerous shortcoming in the current firearms background check law.

In most cases, a licensed gun dealer receives notification within a few minutes, often 90 seconds, from the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, sometimes called the NICS, that a prospective buyer has passed or failed the background check.

In a small percentage of cases, NICS examiners may require additional time to complete the background check if information is missing or unclear in a prospective buyer's record. For example, there may be on the record a notation that the prospective buyer was arrested but no notation as to whether the buyer was acquitted or convicted. That would have to be looked into further.

However, under current law, a licensed gun dealer conducting a background check on a prospective purchaser is permitted to sell the firearm to the purchaser if there has been no determination from NICS after 3 business days, even though NICS has not indicated that the person has actually passed the background check.

Often, we refer to this as a default proceed transaction.

These are the very cases that ought to be investigated. In 2017 alone, the ATF determined that over 4,000 default proceed firearms transfers went to purchasers who should not lawfully have gotten them because they could not lawfully own a firearm.

If NICS is unable to return an instant determination, and especially if there is no report after 3 days, there is real cause for concern.

One notable example of the tragic consequences of this loophole is the hate crime murder of nine people at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, in 2015.

In that tragedy, the shooter was not legally allowed to possess a firearm as a result of drug charges, but he still was able to purchase his gun from a licensed dealer, who made the decision to transfer after 3 business days had elapsed, despite not having received a definitive response from the background check system.

The bill before us today, H.R. 1112, would strengthen the background check procedures Federal firearms licensees or dealers must follow before selling or transferring a firearm.

Under this bill, the initial period a gun dealer must wait for an answer from the NICS is extended from 3 days to 10 days. If, after 10 days, the NICS system has not returned an answer to the dealer, the prospective purchaser may file a petition with the attorney general, which should help resolve most applications in short order.

If an additional 10 days elapses without a response from NICS, the licensed

firearms dealer then may sell or transfer the firearm to the prospective purchaser without the background check completion, if the dealer has no reason to believe that the purchaser is prohibited from obtaining a firearm under Federal, State, or local law.

The additional time for checks to be completed will help prevent the transfer of guns to individuals who are ineligible to possess them and will make us safer.

I want to remind everyone that, in 90 percent of the cases, the NICS system gives the answer within 90 seconds. So we are talking about a small number of cases, but a number of cases where we know there have been tragic results. We want to stop that.

I commend our colleague Congressman JIM CLYBURN, the distinguished Democratic whip, for introducing this bipartisan bill, which is a sensible and necessary approach to addressing this dangerous shortcoming in current law.

Madam Chair, I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill today, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chair, here we go again. Just like yesterday, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle voted to criminalize the transfer of a firearm between two law-abiding citizens.

Today, they further reveal this interest by bringing up a bill that would prohibit law-abiding citizens from ever being able to acquire firearms. And that is not hyperbole, Madam Chair; it is fact.

Let me briefly explain how that would happen. Allow me to walk through the mechanics of this legislation.

Let's start at the beginning of the month. Assume I went to a Federal firearms licensee, an FFL, to purchase a firearm on Friday, February 1, of this month. Under H.R. 1112, the FBI's NICS system has 10 business days to respond to the FFL.

The tenth business day is a Friday, February the 15th. If, after those 10 business days, NICS does not okay the transfer, I must file a petition with the Department of Justice certifying that I have no reason to believe that I am prohibited by Federal, State, or local law from purchasing or possessing a firearm.

Once that petition is filed, the NICS system has an additional 10 days to make a determination. That would be Monday, March 5, in our example because February 18 was a Federal holiday and not a business day.

If, at the conclusion of the 20 business days waiting period, NICS does not deny the transfer, I could then acquire the firearm.

But wait, Madam Chair. Under existing law, the NICS background check is only valid for 30 calendar days from the date it is initiated. Under our example, that would be Saturday, March the 2nd, which is 2 days before my petition is required to be acted upon.