

I stand here today representing all of the loss of the survivors and what they have experienced. But I stand here, representing the hope that my granddaughter, Kamryn Anne Marie Watson, is safe in her school, just like all of the other children should be. Nothing less is acceptable.

PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. TORRES of California). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUDD. Madam Speaker, tomorrow, the House will vote on the Protecting the Right to Organize Act of 2019, or the PRO Act. This legislation is a liberal wish list that represents a draconian overhaul of our Nation's labor laws at the expense of employers, workers, and economic growth, while strengthening the authoritarian power of big labor.

Madam Speaker, despite the fact that the National Labor Relations Board and the U.S. Supreme Court have recognized that there should be ample time for "uninhibited, robust, and wide-open debate in labor disputes," the PRO Act deliberately speeds up election processes so that employees don't have time to learn about the potential downsides of joining a union.

Specifically, the bill codifies the provisions of an NLRB regulation called the "ambush election rule" which significantly shortens the time span in election processes. Democrats purposely inserted this provision because they know union bosses are more likely to win elections when employees are uninformed about the downsides of union membership.

Second, the PRO Act increases liability for businesses by dramatically expanding the definition of "joint employer" to also include indirect control and unexercised potential control over employees. These terms are incredibly broad and ambiguous, meaning businesses could find themselves held liable for labor violations committed by another business when they might not have even been aware that they were considered a joint employer in the first place.

Even worse, the risk of increased liability incentivizes large businesses to stop contracting out to small businesses. This would force large businesses to keep more jobs in-house which, ultimately, raises prices for both businesses and consumers.

The expanded definition of joint employer is also detrimental for franchise businesses. A recent study showed that the definition change has led to a 93 percent increase in lawsuits against franchise businesses, costing them over \$33 billion annually, and leading to the loss of 376,000 jobs.

The study also showed that the majority of franchise businesses have been offering less services just in order to avoid lawsuits. This chilling effect

hurts, again, both workers and consumers alike.

The PRO Act also compels private-sector employees to either join a union or risk being fired. The bill abolishes the State Right to Work Laws which allow workers the freedom to choose whether or not they want to pay fees to a union.

If Right to Work Laws are repealed, not only will unions gain unprecedented new power, but economic growth and employment will suffer. A 2018 study by the National Economic Research Associates found that between 2001 and 2016, States with Right to Work Laws saw private-sector employment grow by 27 percent; while States without Right to Work Laws grew only 15 percent.

To top it off, the PRO Act strips workers of their right to cast anonymous ballots in union elections. Under current law, workers are able to anonymously oppose joining a union by casting "secret" and unpublicized ballots. However, this PRO Act abolishes this practice and forces employees to make their choice public about unionizing, which makes it easier for unions to intimidate and threaten workers who do not wish to sign up.

Senior fellow at the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, Vincent Vernuccio, has said: "The secret ballot is a bedrock principle of democracy. It allows people to vote the way they feel without fear of reprisal. Without it, those who hold the elections would hold all the power."

This bill should be opposed by anyone who is concerned with worker freedom and continuing our country's economic boom. The PRO Act needs to be permanently benched.

□ 1030

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL GUN VIOLENCE SURVIVORS WEEK

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

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, today, I rise because it is National Gun Violence Survivors Week, a time when we focus on sharing and amplifying the stories of gun violence survivors who live with the impacts of gun violence every day.

I recall the morning of June 12, 2016, when my wife and I were awakened at 6 in the morning by a barrage of texts because the unthinkable happened to our happy little town of Orlando, Florida. Gun violence on a massive scale had reared its ugly head at a place where people just wanted to have a good time, at the Pulse nightclub.

We lost 49 Americans that day, 49 of my fellow Orlandoans who were just there to enjoy friendship and camaraderie. Their lives were taken way too early from us. But we also have to focus on the 53 who were wounded, the survivors of the Pulse nightclub tragedy. One of them is a coworker of mine, Ramses Tinoco.

Ramses is a paralegal who was good spirited, hard-working, and always excited about the job. Suddenly, for several weeks, he wasn't able to come back to work, or at least in a regular fashion. I remember talking to him about what it was like to be there. It was hard for him to talk about it, and I don't blame him because no one should have to see those types of horrors.

Another good friend of mine, Ricardo Negron-Almodovar, a lawyer in Puerto Rico who came to central Florida for a new start, and within less than a year of living in Orlando, he faced this vicious tragedy. But he has been fighting back. He is now on the Pulse national memorial advisory committee. We have a bipartisan bill going through the House that would make it a national memorial to remember those 49 we lost and those 53 wounded survivors.

But I also want to talk about the folks who take care of the survivors.

Terry DeCarlo, who is pictured here on the far right, was retiring the Monday after the Pulse nightclub shooting from the LGBT+ Center in Orlando. Terry couldn't retire when his community needed him most, so he stayed on for a year, bringing in supplies, helping with mental health, helping the families coming from around the country to help their loved ones who were still surviving.

During that time, all Terry thought about was others. It was only a few months after he retired a year-plus later that he found out that he had advanced stages of cancer that was teeming through his jaw. One can only wonder whether, if he wasn't so busy, he might have gotten treatment or had noticed beforehand. But that wasn't Terry.

Terry cared about others. Terry lived to serve, and we just lost him last month. It is a sad tragedy, but Terry's legacy will be remembered.

We also have to honor with action, with real solutions. The shooter in this instance had a SIG Sauer MCX semi-automatic rifle, a weapon of war made for battlefields, not for a suburban nightclub, one that could do unspeakable carnage even before police could get on the scene.

There are things that are even more common ground than assault weapons bans. Our House passed a bipartisan universal background checks bill to make sure that, simply, those who aren't supposed to have guns don't get them. With giant loopholes for gun shows and private sales, this just doesn't make sense. It is time to pass it.

Also, the Charleston loophole, where we saw someone put a false address, and when the background check didn't come back, he automatically got his guns and shot up a church in Charleston.

It is time for action.

ADDRESSING SERIOUSNESS OF SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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

Mr. BACON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address a serious issue that affects millions of people around the world, to include many Americans: slavery and human trafficking. Despite major progress, many countries still struggle to define and understand human traffic operations and how to combat it.

Most of us assume that human trafficking transports people only internationally. In reality, the 2019 Trafficking in Persons Report showed that a majority of human trafficking survivors were identified in their countries of citizenship. While women and children may account for the majority of people trafficked, adolescent boys and men also have been victims of this modern-day slavery.

Everyone is vulnerable to human trafficking, women, children, foster youth, Native Americans, immigrant children, those with disabilities, and the LGBTQ community. That is why the public must be educated on human trafficking and reject the misconception that it can't or won't happen to them or someone they know.

While there is not an exact statistic on how many people are trafficked in the United States, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo assessed as many as 24.9 million people—adults and children—are trapped in this human form of modern slavery around the world, including our own country.

We may also assume trafficking occurs only in major cities like New York or Las Vegas, but it also happens in suburbs, rural areas, and on Tribal or farmland. In Nebraska, 900 individuals are being sold online for sex each month, and 75 percent of them are from just Omaha.

I am grateful for the steps Nebraska has taken to combat trafficking and protect survivors, but legislation can do only so much. Organizations such as the Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of State have worked hard to fight this global issue and have been trained to locate and deter human trafficking.

I thank the Nebraska State Patrol, the sheriff departments, and local law enforcement for their diligent work in capturing traffickers and rescuing survivors. I thank the many nonprofit volunteer organizations that are dedicated to making a difference in combating this crime.

In honor of the National Slavery and Human Trafficking Month this past January, we must commit to work together to address this heinous crime and ensure that all are safe from exploitation.

BRINGING AWARENESS TO IMPORTANCE OF MENTORING

Mr. BACON. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of National Mentoring

Month from this past January. As a member of the Youth Mentoring Caucus, I rise to bring awareness to the importance of supporting strategies and policies that enhance mentoring programs and increase the procurement of quality volunteer mentors.

Research has shown that mentoring relationships have positive effects on people's lives in so many ways. Mentoring reassures our youth that they are not alone in dealing with everyday challenges; creates opportunity for personal growth and development; and provides youth, especially those in foster care, with vital relationships, networks, and counseling services needed to navigate life and successfully transition into adulthood.

I know the power of mentorship firsthand. I joined the Air Force in 1985 after a faith-based mentor saw where my talents leaned, and I would never have been a five-time commander nor a general officer without thoughtful mentors.

In my district, MENTOR Nebraska has partnered with 26 Omaha public schools to implement a mentoring program called Success Mentors, which serves over 600 youth. Within the last 2 years, the percentage of mentored youth in North Omaha increased by 150 percent. In the last 5 years, the percentage of mentored juvenile justice youth increased by 250 percent. In addition to a number of positive benefits associated with increased mentorship, this program has shown an improvement in school attendance—by over 50 percent in one school alone.

Congress must partner and support State and local governments and nonprofits so they can continue to prioritize new ways and approaches for serving at-risk or disadvantaged youth and connect them with caring adults who will help them navigate life and be their support system.

That is why I am an original cosponsor of H.R. 3061, the Foster Youth Mentoring Act of 2019, which addresses the need for greater support of mentoring programs that serve youth in foster care by developing best practices and quality mentoring standards when searching for and hiring mentors.

I thank our Nation's mentors, who are actively strengthening our communities and making a difference in the educational, personal, and professional lives of today's youth. Additionally, I urge my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to commit to improving our youth's outcomes and futures by supporting legislation like H.R. 3061.

RECOGNIZING GUN VIOLENCE SURVIVORS WEEK

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

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Madam Speaker, this week, we recognize Gun Violence Survivors Week across our country. In my district alone, there

have been 331 gun-related deaths and 716 injuries, including seven mass shootings over the last 7 years.

There are two sides of the coin when it comes to ending gun violence. Implementing commonsense gun safety measures that a vast majority of Americans support must be our top priority. At the same time, we have to begin addressing the root cause of gun violence in our communities, which is a revolving door phenomenon. Victims of gun violence are caught up in the drug wars, the culture of retaliation, and disrespect.

In fact, the rate of violent reinjury at most of the Nation's trauma centers is as high as 45 percent. One of the leading risk factors for violent injury is prior violent injury.

While these victims are recuperating in the hospital, they are a captive audience. They are confined to bed, if only for a few days. This offers us a window of opportunity where we can offer support when they most need it.

I am in the process of finalizing bipartisan, bicameral legislation with my colleague Congressman KINZINGER from Illinois, and our measure creates a new grant program to provide the victims of gun violence, who often become repeat victims of predators themselves, with the resources they need to stop this vicious cycle. This might include bus money, clothes for a job interview, or some groceries. Often, victims need help finding an affordable apartment or getting off drugs.

Violence intervention programs, like the ones that our bill will support, work. They reduce recidivism and hospital readmissions, jail time, and unemployment. This is why my previously introduced bill was endorsed by organizations such as the NAACP, the Fraternal Order of Police, and the American College of Surgeons.

The University of Maryland's Shock Trauma Center has been rated the top trauma center in the world. They support our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. They do research as it relates to all sorts of trauma. Shock Trauma is led by Dr. Tom Scalea, with the great doctors, nurses, and aides who work in that great institution. They have implemented this program that I am talking about here today, and let me tell you, it works.

I am excited to reintroduce my bill so we can work on lowering the rates of firearm deaths throughout the country.

HONORING EDDIE BRIDGES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOLDING. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Eddie Bridges of Greensboro, North Carolina.

Members of Congress rarely get the opportunity to honor those who have truly dedicated their lives to the public good. That is because it is increasingly