

ADDRESSING SERIOUSNESS OF
SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAF-
FICKING

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