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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 6, 2020.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HENRY CUELLAR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2020, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

HONORING SURVIVORS OF GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. ADAMS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the survivors of gun violence.

Last month, I had the opportunity to meet with Jules Oringel of Charlotte when she led the Pledge of Allegiance at my State of the District address. She is a local high school senior, and her story is a story that no young woman should ever have to tell.

She was at home in her room, on her phone, like any teenager, and then she gets a message from one of her best friends. She says there is an active shooter in her school and she doesn't know what is going on. She tells everyone in the group chat she loves us.

The best friend is at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Eventually, Jules learns that one of the people she had attended camp with lost her life in the shooting.

Jules says, for the next few weeks, she was riddled with anxiety at school, at other public spaces; she couldn't sleep, and she did not know how her friends would heal.

That is something no young woman should ever go through.

That is not okay with me.

In the aftermath, Jules stepped up to start the nonprofit Return Home Supplies, because every student and every teacher deserves to return home.

It is hard for me to believe that we have reached a point in our country where people have legitimate concerns about making it home at the end of the day. As a 40-year educator, I cannot imagine how students balance those concerns with every other challenge that they face.

And that is not okay with me.

Last year, the city of Charlotte saw the worst violence that we have seen in decades. Tragically, we concluded 2019 with 107 murders, the highest in decades. Our community lost a disproportionate number of African American men whose lives matter, too. The towns of the 12th Congressional District lost people to gun violence as well.

And that is not okay with me.

107 murders, total—the vast majority involving guns. Charlotte families lost siblings and parents and loved ones and community members, congregants, students, and children to gun violence. Our community has been torn apart.

That is not okay with me.

Our very own UNC Charlotte, our 49ers, lost two souls who called our community home. Four other students were gravely injured, and our community was shaken to its core. And many of us are still in disbelief.

A school shooting happened in Charlotte. In a hallowed place that is supposed to prepare our youth for their future, two futures ended.

It was the first mass shooting that we have had at a school in Charlotte, and it should also be the last.

That is not okay with me.

Many Holy Books tell us that whoever destroys a single life is considered by Scripture to have destroyed the whole world, and whoever saves a single life is considered by Scripture to have saved the whole world. Each time we lose someone, we lose an entire world, an entire universe of hopes, dreams, and aspirations; we lose a thread that binds together families and communities.

Well, as a Charlotte community, as a nation, we must do something to stop the gun violence that tears at the fabric of our communities.

In this Congress, the first three bills the House sent to the Senate took weapons of war off the street and would make our communities safer. Now that the Senate has concluded its impeachment trial, they have no excuse to continue to hold these bills up other than they just don't care.

And that is not okay with me.

My colleagues and I have led the efforts to introduce key pieces of legislation that would close the loophole in our background checks, extend the background check process, prohibit those convicted of hate crimes from purchasing firearms, and reinstate the Federal ban on assault weapons.

I would like to take a moment to applaud the Charlotte City Council for

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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taking the lead with their Safe Communities Committee and our educational institutions for their security upgrades and initiatives.

Despite this Congress, more work lies ahead. And that is personal to me, because the violence must stop.

Let me end by sharing one more message from the Queen City. Our city's comedians at Charlotte Squawks took a break from being funny to add a somber note to the comedy show.

To the tune of "This Land is Your Land" by Woody Guthrie:

This land is Parkland,
It's Columbine and
It's Thousands Oaks at
A student line dance.
From Santa Fe High School
To Virginia Beach murders,
This stuff is not okay with me.
As I keep watching
This endless violence,
With thoughts and prayers for
A moment of silence,
The politicians
Are doing nothing,
This stuff is not okay with me.

I agree. This is not okay with me. We need sensible gun laws, and we need them right now.

HAROLD KNIGHT AND DAVID HALE TO BE INDUCTED INTO GRAND NATIONAL TURKEY CALLERS HALL OF FAME

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

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Trigg Countians Harold Knight and David Hale for their coming induction into the Grand National Turkey Callers Hall of Fame. Next week in Nashville, they will be formally recognized for this high honor within the hunting and turkey calling world.

Kentuckians are notably passionate about hunting and outdoors, but maybe none as much as Harold and David. Their impact on this unique industry cannot be understated.

Starting in the early 1970s, these two individuals started Knight & Hale Game Calling and have been promoting their passion for the outdoors ever since. What began as a small startup out of a basement has become a successful and recognized enterprise within the hunting industry.

After 40 years of work and raising significant attention to the field of game calling, I am thrilled to see two of my constituents receive this very high honor. This distinguished accomplishment is certainly something to be proud of and is deserving of recognition by this entire body.

HONORING THE PADUCAH WORKFORCE EFFORTS

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, near the end of last week, I had the privilege of being back home in Kentucky and, as I try to do often, visit with constituents and see some of the exciting programs underway in the First Congressional District.

While stopping in the city of Paducah, I had the opportunity to see some

of the life-changing workforce development opportunities becoming available to our citizens. In a time when we have more available jobs than qualified workers to fill them, both the McCracken County Jail and Paducah's school system are stepping up to fill the void.

At the local jail, I saw the great work they are doing to provide low-level inmates with a pathway to becoming productive members of society. The training programs they are providing for welding and HVAC training will help fill critical workforce gaps and reduce incarceration rates over the long term.

Once operational, the Paducah Innovation Hub will house technical classes like carpentry, welding, and engineering. I was excited to see the construction of this new innovative facility, which will be a model for education moving forward.

The old model of 4-year degrees and piles of student loan debt are not the answer for moving forward in education. Instead, we must emphasize certificates and skills training. I thoroughly enjoyed traveling my district and seeing firsthand the need for a more skills-based education system moving forward.

I am proud to represent McCracken County in this distinguished body, and I look forward to seeing the great work being done by the McCracken County Jail—and, in the future, the Paducah Innovation Hub—become a model for both Kentucky and the entire Nation.

COMMENDING PRESIDENT TRUMP'S SUCCESSFUL WEEK

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend President Trump for the overwhelmingly successful week he has had in Washington.

In addition to delivering a strong and forward-looking vision to the country on Tuesday night, the President has finally been acquitted of the baseless smear charges leveled against him by NANCY PELOSI and ADAM SCHIFF.

The historically partisan impeachment put forward by House Democrats was a stain on American history. But, thankfully, their desperate attempt to silence the will of the American people is finally behind us.

Starting with President Trump's unifying State of the Union Address, the country is now ready to move forward. It is long past time for Congress to join the President in advancing a positive agenda that will improve the lives of every single American. That includes moving on from classless actions like tearing up Presidential speeches on national television.

Whether it be the current economic boom, fairer trade deals, or steady leadership in keeping America safe, the President has a strong record of accomplishment. But, as always, we have more challenges to tackle.

I sincerely hope to see the Democrats move beyond the politics of impeachment and resistance and get to work for the American people. It is time for

action on lowering healthcare costs, securing the southern border, and continuing to advance our Nation's tremendous economic momentum.

I hope to see my Democrat colleagues join me in supporting the President's efforts to improve opportunities for working families and keep Americans safe. The millions of Americans whom we represent expect and deserve nothing less.

NATIONAL GUN VIOLENCE SURVIVORS WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate National Gun Violence Survivors Week and to honor and support the Oregonians and people across the country who have been affected by gun violence.

Gun violence is a public health crisis in this country. Each year, more than 36,000 people, nationwide, including almost 500 Oregonians, are killed by guns, and more than 100,000 people across the country are injured by gunfire.

For those survivors of gun violence and the friends and families of those killed, life will never be the same.

Nobody is immune to the threat of gun violence, and communities have been forced to take what should be unthinkable steps to protect themselves.

Parents are buying bulletproof backpacks for their young children.

Schools across the country are conducting active-shooter drills to make sure their students know what to do in the event of an attack. These drills often cause trauma for students and for educators.

At a townhall meeting, a student told me the first thing she does when she goes into a classroom is she looks where to hide and how to escape.

As a mom, this is heartbreaking; as a policymaker, it is unacceptable. Kids in classrooms should be focused on learning, not being fearful for their lives. This is not normal, and it should never be normal.

But there is reason to be hopeful. Families and communities in Oregon and around the country are rising up and demanding change. Students are demanding that Congress finally take action to protect them.

This Congress, we took the critical step of passing H.R. 8, a comprehensive bipartisan background check bill that will save lives if it is enacted. I call on Leader MCCONNELL to immediately bring H.R. 8 to the floor. We cannot wait any longer. Every day this bill languishes in the Senate is another day when people are dying in Oregon and around the country.

We will not rest until we have done all we can to reduce gun violence in this country. We owe it to the children who are looking for a place to hide in the classrooms; we owe it to the families who are mourning their loved ones