First, to the teachers who have been through so much in these last 2 years and who jumped into action when the crisis struck; to the police officers and sheriff's deputies who headed straight into the school without hesitation and who told me, ''We were going inside no matter what. We were never going to simply stage outside and wait to assess the risks to ourselves''; to all the firefighters and first responders from our area and well beyond who didn't wait for direction and simply steamed straight for Oxford; to the 911 dispatch operators who took more than 100 calls from terrified children whispering and crying from their hiding places, and the dispatch shift leaders who ran the massive logistical operation to coordinate over 300 first responders at the school; and to the doctors, nurses, EMS, and hospital staff who put emergency procedures in place and all answered the call to help, what you did saved children, and teachers, and administrators.

You saved someone's child, someone's brother, someone's mom. You kept people on this Earth for their families to cherish and hold close. And every one of them will remember that day and the role you played. There are children in that school who will go on to be police officers and firefighters and doctors because of how you responded this week, and for that, we owe you so much.

Madam Speaker, over the last few days, I have thought a great deal about the sacrifices we ask our kids to make and the burdens we ask them to bear. We are all so exhausted seeing fleeing students, panicked parents, and bewildered teachers.

The inescapable conclusion we must draw is that we are failing our children, not just failing to keep them safe but failing to set an example. Our daily rhetoric continues to deteriorate. Threats of violence are commonplace.

As someone who worked alongside the military for years, I was trained that leadership climate is set at the top. Whether you are the leader of a platoon or a small town, or simply the head of a household, the leadership style you use in your own life will be internalized by those you lead. It will become the standard. Nowhere is this more clear than with our kids.

The hard truth is that violence, including gun violence, has become normal. Threatening someone online has become normal. Inciting violence and calling for violence has become normal. People do it online, in neighborhood forums, at school board meetings, at hospitals, on airplanes, and even on the steps of this Capitol, like it is nothing at all, like it is somehow part of their freedom of speech. But it is not.

Threatening other people is where our freedom of speech ends. But how are kids to understand that? How are they to rationalize the lessons they learned in kindergarten to treat others as we would like to be treated if they see adults demonstrating the opposite?

That betrayal has taken hold in the roots of our communities. Not a day goes by that I don't hear about it, and our kids are watching our every move.

This tragedy also makes clear that we are in desperate need of mental health support for our young people. Services and providers are scarce, and there is no way of meeting the need, especially in the wake of COVID.

Our children are using violence, contemplating suicide, and generally struggling more than at any other time in our history, and we must acknowledge that and provide the resources to our communities to manage the demand.

In these first 48 hours since the attack, that is where my office and so many others have been trying to engage, to find Federal money, to find State money. We need to address the mental health crisis in this country with the seriousness that it demands or be prepared to live with the consequences.

In the immediate aftermath of tragedy, in these moments of intense suffering, there is often a need to understand what to do with our pain by jumping into politics and policy. I must admit, I am torn about that discussion because my community is still reeling from the crisis, and our attention has been focused on immediate crisis response.

But there are some basic facts that simply can't be swept under the rug: that a deadly weapon purchased legally fell into the hands of a 15-year-old child. I come from a family of gun owners. I was trained to carry two different firearms on my person at all times during my three tours with the CIA in Iraq.

But if a 15-year-old boy can get ahold of a weapon purchased by his father on a Friday and use it to terrorize and murder his classmates on a Tuesday, something in our country is horribly wrong.

Whether we like it or not, Oxford will be a town that our kids read about, joining a long list of communities that have become synonymous with the greatest tragedies our country has seen: Columbine, Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook, Parkland, Santa Fe, and so many more.

This is, sadly, not a new set of issues. Long before the events in Oxford, the U.S. House passed a bill requiring basic background checks for purchases of any and all guns, just like we do at Walmart now.

This bill had both Democratic and Republican cosponsors. It was one of those rare instances of this body rising to the occasion with some basic common sense. We voted on this bill a few years ago in the last Congress, and we voted on it again this last March 2021.

That bill is currently sitting in the U.S. Senate. It could be voted on tomorrow if there was a will to act.

Please, to our colleagues in the Senate, take up this important bipartisan legislation.

□ 2040

I am also focused on what it means to be a responsible gun owner. Michigan is full of them, including my own family. But if you are going to own a gun, you should be responsible for storing it safely and for taking basic steps to ensure that the gun doesn't end up in the hands of a child or a criminal or a dangerous person. Adults should be held accountable for how they handle their guns.

This is an issue we are particularly watching in Oxford, where the Oakland County prosecutor is considering charging the parents of the shooter for their child's access to that gun. This is one of the areas we are looking at for additional legislation, and I know that a similar bill is being looked at in the Michigan legislature.

In the coming days and week, more facts will emerge from this horrible tragedy and help guide our thinking on how to ensure that our children—Hana, Madisyn, Tate, and Justin—did not die in vain.

To my colleagues in both parties, I look to you all, every single one of you, to join me in recognizing the pain that our community is going through and to make sure it means something.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 11(b) of House Resolution 188, the House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon (at 8 o'clock and 41 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, December 3, 2021, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC–2802. A letter from the Associate Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Bifenthrin; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2016-0352 and EPA-HQ-OPP-2019-0560; FRL-8945-01-OCSPP] received November 18, 2021, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC–2803. A letter from the Associate Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Approval; California; San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District; Stationary Source Permits [EPA-R09-OAR-2020-0238; FRL-8896-02-R9] received November 18, 2021, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC–2804. A letter from the Associate Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Arkansas: Final Authorization of State Hazardous Waste Management Program Revision [EPA-R06-RCRA-2021-0073; FRL-8800-02-R6] received November 18, 2021, pursuant to 5 U.S.C.