

SANTA FE SHOOTING ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WEBER) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arkansas for his service to the people of Arkansas and the people up here in this very humble institution.

Mr. Speaker, today marks the 5-year anniversary of the shooting in Santa Fe High School where 10 innocent lives were lost at the hands of evil. We will never forget that. We will never forget that tragic day that has forever changed Santa Fe, Texas.

My heart and my prayers still go out to the family and friends of those we lost, and I remain immensely grateful to the law enforcement officers who responded to that scene at their own peril.

Mr. Speaker, it is often a good guy with a gun that stops the bad guy with a gun. In Santa Fe, Texas, it was a brave law enforcement officer. Let me tell you that disarming legal gun owners will never, ever make us safer. There are, however, Mr. Speaker, steps that we can take to secure our schools without infringing on our citizens' Second Amendment rights.

There is no reason why our schools should be soft targets. We clearly have the resources and the means to protect the most precious amongst us, and that is going to be our children and their teachers.

Mr. Speaker, we should do everything we can to help school districts. We can hire armed professional police officers to help protect our schools, the kids, protect their teachers, and the staff.

Following the shooting in Santa Fe, I participated in roundtable meetings to discuss that very thing; namely, enhanced security for our schools. I heard about the need to emphasize safety in school architecture and design. We heard about ways to encourage gun owners to responsibly lock away their weapons, and the ways school marshal programs can ensure that armed and trained personnel are present on those campuses.

In response, I introduced a school safety package, Mr. Speaker. The first bill in that package is the Protect Our Children's Schools Act, which would allow the Secretary of Education to use unspent COVID-19 funds designated for schools and localities to reprogram those funds to make our schools safer against those kinds of attacks. This money would be used to strengthen and enhance security systems already in place at those schools.

The second bill, Mr. Speaker, the Protect Against School Shootings, or the PASS Act, would allow qualified law enforcement officers, retired law enforcement officers, and those permitted by State law to carry a firearm in an otherwise gun-free school zone.

Then there is the School Resource Officer Compensation Act, which would incentivize school districts to hire retired law enforcement officers to serve as school resource officers, or SROs, by exempting the respective school districts from the additional expense of having to pay matching Social Security contributions to anyone desiring to serve in this critical safety role.

Mr. Speaker, it is a win-win-win. Schools get armed and trained by professionals. The schools can hire those professionals at a reduced rate and enjoy the additional savings. The law enforcement officer professionals can continue to serve their communities by protecting those very kids in their communities without financial penalty.

The last bill in the package is the Securing Our Schools Act, which would enhance school security, including doubling school resource officers, hiring more school-based mental health counselors, and expanding the nonprofit security grant program.

Mr. Speaker, I think we all agree that we need to secure our schools to ensure another senseless crime doesn't happen in our communities.

Today, I pray for Santa Fe High School and the families who lost their loved ones. May 18, 2018, will forever be ingrained in me and etched on my heart.

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

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DESTROYING AMERICA FROM WITHIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is the time for authorizations, and one of the topics of discussion today, of course, is our armed services authorizations, military bills, as we get briefings on what is necessary to defend our country from our external enemies.

However, let us not forget that when Nikita Khrushchev spoke to the American public in the 1960s, he said:

We will take America without firing a shot. We will bury you. We can't expect the American people to jump from capitalism to communism, but we can assist their elected leaders in giving them small doses of socialism until, one final day, they wake up and find they are living in a communist government.

Now, how could our great country, the strongest country in the world, be destroyed from within?

I also point out that when the KGB was active in this country in the seventies and eighties, the majority of agents were not spies. They were not engaged in looking for our military secrets. They were, apparently, out in the open, trying to corrupt Americans into how they understood our country should be operating. They were taking

advantage of our freedoms in what is supposed to be a constitution made for a moral and religious people.

How would you go about destroying America from within? First of all, briefly, we would try to destroy the currency. We know there has been wild and reckless spending recently, to the degree that our debt-to-GDP ratio is the highest it has been since the end of World War II. Our debt to gross national product is almost 100 percent.

We were there at the end of World War II, but we knew at the end of World War II, millions of people were going to be laid off from the military. We were going to stop building ships, planes, and tanks that we needed. Sure enough, we dropped from about 100 percent of GDP to a little over 20 percent during Nixon until we began to slowly creep up again.

More recently, in part because of irresponsible legislation like the American Rescue Plan or the successor to Build Back Better, which were able to pass because the Democrats had the House, the Senate, and the Presidency and were able to use something called reconciliation to get it done, we have now shot back up near 100 percent, near an all-time high.

This time, we don't see an area in the future in which hundreds of thousands of soldiers and sailors are going to be laid off or that we are going to stop building weaponry. Contrary to that, we do see an aging population in which the amount we spend on Social Security and Medicare is going to continue to go up.

I think you could say getting ahold of these people in this House and persuading way too many of them that spending doesn't work, we have approached an area, a crisis area, which could result in the end of the United States.

Secondly, I think if I were going to destroy America, I would try to destroy the family. Beginning in the 1960s, we had a welfare program that was largely conditioned upon keeping one parent, usually the father, out of the house.

This goal was made more apparent when Black Lives Matter, which played such a big role in the 2020 elections, outright came out and said they were opposed to the Western-prescribed nuclear family. Of course, there was a tight alliance between Black Lives Matter and the Democratic Party.

Within a few years of the Great Society in the sixties, it was apparent that the welfare system was destroying families. Patrick Moynihan, who eventually became a Senator up here, made it clear, by 1970, we were destroying families with this welfare program.

Apparently, because some people wanted to destroy families, his warnings went unheeded. We worked our way toward a higher and higher percentage of children being raised without a father in the home.

We also worked our way toward too many men not having families and not