

White House is insisting that infrastructure investment needs to be part of this negotiation.

A third of our deficit is due to chronic high unemployment in the United States of America. If we could put people back to work, a third of the deficit goes away. What if we put them to work rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure? There are 150,000 bridges in America that need substantial repair or replacement. Forty percent of the pavement on the National Highway System doesn't just need resurfacing. It needs to be dug up; it needs new roadbed. And there is a \$70 billion backlog on transit systems in this country, replacing worn, outmoded equipment. Those are manufacturing jobs, energy jobs—jobs not only in construction, but in many other areas; and they spill over into small business and the general economy.

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We also need to build an efficient 21st century infrastructure. It's about 27,000 jobs for every billion dollars we invest. Now, historically we haven't borrowed money to make these investments. We have paid for our infrastructure with fees and taxes—principally the gas tax, but others, but the Federal gas tax hasn't changed since 1993. In 1993, you paid \$1.11 for a gallon of gas and 18.4 cents went to build our national infrastructure. This last year in my district, people paid over \$4.40 for a gallon of gas and 18.4 cents went to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure.

We've lost more than a third of the purchasing power of the highway trust fund just due to inflation. Over the next 2 years we will borrow \$18 billion just to tread water with the highway trust fund, and if we want to tread water over the next 10 years we'll borrow another \$110 billion. Will that happen in deficit-obsessed Washington, D.C.? Not likely. Does that mean quicker deterioration of our infrastructure? Does that mean we forego the jobs? Perhaps not.

If we just simply indexed the existing Federal gas tax set in 1993 at 18.4 cents to highway cost construction inflation and improved fleet fuel economy—so that you don't lose ground because people purchase less gas—we could, over the next decade, save \$128 billion—deficit reduction—and have an additional increment on top of that to begin to catch up with the huge backlog in our crumbling infrastructure in this country and put millions of people to work. It seems a very sensible solution: deficit reduction, jobs, and sound infrastructure. I hope those on the other side of the aisle will be receptive to the proposals from the White House for this needed investment.

This isn't the stupid stimulus bill that threw everything but the kitchen sink at the economy. Many things were not well spent. Four percent of that money went to infrastructure investment; over 40 percent went to stupid tax cuts that didn't put anybody back to work.

#### NEWTOWN

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

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, our hearts are grieving with the entire Newtown community and all the families who lost loved ones last Friday. We mourn the 26 innocent lives, including those 20 children who have been lost in this unimaginable tragedy. Let me also just acknowledge the quick action of the brave law enforcement and first responders who prevented additional losses of life.

Words cannot express my deep sorrow, but as a mother and as a grandmother I join the country and my district in extending my condolences to every family and the entire community touched by this unspeakable tragedy.

This violence must stop. As President Obama so eloquently said on Sunday, we cannot accept that this violence visited on children year after year is somehow the price of freedom. No more excuses, Madam Speaker. No more kicking the can down the road. Not one more innocent life—not one more in Chicago, not one more in Oakland, not one more in any town, in any city, in any school, in any theater, or in any place of worship, in any mall, or in any of our neighborhoods. We have an obligation to our children to ensure that Newtown marks a turning point that made us finally say, enough is enough.

My district, unfortunately, knows these weapons of war oh so well, where too many innocent children continue to be killed in these war zones. We must come together to build an America where our children do not have to live in fear and where they do have a future.

Madam Speaker, we need to take some serious action that includes gun safety by banning these high-capacity magazines, expanding the 24-hour gun background check, closing the gun show loophole, and reinstating the assault weapons ban immediately. This of course includes ending violence in our homes, in our streets, and in our communities.

By seeking input from young people, community stakeholders, the faith community and others, we need to work together to identify the root causes of this country's more than 16,000 homicides a year—this also includes recognizing gun violence as a critical public health crisis—and continue to support comprehensive violence prevention plans.

I've heard many say this over and over again, but we also must focus on making mental health care widely accessible and affordable. As a psychiatric social worker and someone who founded a community mental health center when the psychiatric facilities were beginning to shut down, I understand firsthand why we need to look at how we have to help people struggling with mental illness and make serious progress in treatment

and reduce the stigma associated with seeking help.

All of this of course is going to take resources. Nowhere do we know this more than in my own congressional district in Alameda County and in Oakland, where we know all too well the impact of budget cuts on violence and crime. We cannot allow any cuts to Medicare and Medicaid that might prevent families from getting the psychiatric help and support that they need. How else can we look at our children and our grandchildren this holiday season if we don't move as a Nation to finally address this violence that threatens the very core of our country?

In the coming weeks, all of us must work with President Obama, Senator FEINSTEIN, Congresswoman CAROLYN MCCARTHY, Congressman BOBBY SCOTT and all of our colleagues to be brave and to be bold enough to pass measures that ensure gun safety and a comprehensive solution to ensure that our children have a future in a peaceful Nation.

Madam Speaker, we can and we must do all of these things and more so that we can prevent tragedies like this from ever happening again.

On behalf of all my constituents, let me express once again our thoughts and our prayers for all of those impacted by this tragedy in Newtown and the entire State of Connecticut.

#### SANDY HOOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SHOOTING

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

Ms. FUDGE. Madam Speaker, it is with great sorrow that I rise today to address the senseless murders that took place in Newtown, Connecticut, this past Friday. Mass shootings are always difficult to bear. This one is exceptionally disturbing due to the loss of so many children and those who bravely tried to protect them.

The massacre that occurred at Sandy Hook Elementary School will forever be embedded in our memory, as will the photos of 20 children as young as 5 years of age who perished in that school, a place that should be safe, a school. These innocent children will never have the opportunity to enjoy their teenage years, to go to a prom, or have families of their own. We owe a debt of gratitude to the teachers who lost their lives trying to shield our children from this senseless crime.

I stand here today unable to make sense of what is a completely incomprehensible situation. We may never know what compelled the shooter in this tragedy to use such high-powered weapons to inflict pain on so many innocent people, but what we do know is that these kinds of crimes are on the rise in our society.

Gun violence, and the culture associated with it, has become so prevalent that now our babies can't even go to

school without fear of being gunned down in their classrooms. We've seen this kind of violence on a college campus in Blacksburg, at a high school in Columbine, and now at an elementary school in Newtown.

Since 1982 there have been more than 60 mass murders carried out with firearms across this country. In the last 5 years alone we have had 19 mass shootings. That's a rate of more than one every 4 months. These are alarming numbers, and we as a Nation must be willing to do something about it.

There have been calls by some for meaningful action, but I implore my colleagues that what we really need is immediate action. The issue of eradicating gun violence is ripe, and we must act now.

The first thing we must do is ban assault weapons of all types. Their only purpose is to kill the largest amount of people in the shortest amount of time. Tragically, the Newtown shooter used a military-style weapon to perform his evil deeds.

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Weapons with the ability to carry out such deadly force do not belong on our streets. I challenge anyone to justify the use of these weapons anywhere but on the battlefield for which they were designed.

Proponents of gun rights say that there is an absolute right to bear arms. I disagree. All rights are subject to reasonable restrictions. But what is absolute is that I have a right to leave my home without being shot. People have the right to worship their God without being massacred. The children of Sandy Hook Elementary had an absolute right to go to school without being gunned down. No one sends their child to school expecting that they won't come home.

I understand there are many factors that contribute to these unforgivable acts of violence, but we must start somewhere. It is time for us to have a serious and deliberate conversation about a comprehensive national gun policy that eliminates loopholes in the laws and requires uniform background checks. Enforcing current laws is not getting the job done. We must do more to ensure that our citizens feel safe and secure in their homes, schools, movie theaters, shopping malls, and neighborhoods. We cannot wait for another Tucson, Aurora, Oak Creek, or Newtown massacre. We must take action now.

I ask my colleagues, where do you stand? Whose side are you on? I'm on the side of every man, woman, and child killed in senseless violence. Who in this House can be against common-sense gun safety regulations? Anyone who is is on the wrong side.

#### PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE DANIEL K. INOUE

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

Ms. HIRONO. I stand here today to give tribute to my friend, Hawaii's senior Senator—our country's senior Senator—DANIEL K. INOUE. With your passing, my friend, I want to tell you that no one can fill your shoes.

In Hawaii, we jokingly say that there are three economic drivers in our State: tourism, defense, and Senator INOUE. And it's true. His work and his unselfishness in serving his State and country are unparalleled.

He served our country during war at a time when people who looked like him were not considered American citizens. He did it and served our country honorably and with respect and with incredible strength and character. He did it because he believed in what our country should and could be. Our country—great; our country—about service; our country—about our children and our future; our country—honorable. His personal legacy in my home State of Hawaii could and will never be matched. Never.

Hawaii, we will never be able to thank Senator INOUE for his service and what he has done for us. It is too great to put into words, and it cannot be done in a 5-minute tribute.

But what I want to give my aloha and thanks to Senator INOUE for, is bigger than all of us: for his commitment to serve and protect our brave men and women who fight for our country, for his dedication and willingness to work in a bipartisan fashion, for standing up for the ideals of freedom and justice that our country is founded upon, for always standing up for our proud heritage in Hawaii.

Senator INOUE was, as so many have recognized, a genuine patriot, a uniquely proud American, and a man and a leader always true to his word. But Senator INOUE was also an architect and a builder. Half a century ago, he had an architect's vision of the Hawaii we inherit from him today. Over his many decades of service, he displayed a builder's skill—pouring the foundation of the modern and vibrant Hawaii that we inherit from him today. That is his legacy.

So the greatest tribute we can pay Senator INOUE is to acquire his vision, to apply his skills and build on the remarkable foundation he laid for us.

I know this is the tribute that I will pay to my friend. I know this is the tribute that the people of Hawaii will pay to Senator INOUE. Hawaii drew incredible strength from the life and service of DAN INOUE, and it is that very strength—strength of purpose and strength of character—that will keep Hawaii and our country strong for years to come.

The Senator INOUE I knew and loved, and that we all loved and respected, would expect this of Hawaii and us, and we will not let him down.

#### THE SHOOTING TRAGEDY IN NEWTOWN, CONNECTICUT

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

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Now it's Newtown, 20 innocents and their six teachers. More tears, more burials, but will we heed its meaning? Will we break the gun lobby spell that has held us in thrall to a psychosis that has left us numb and paralyzed with each passing tragedy? I think so.

First step in any recovery program: admit the problem. We have too many weapons with too much ammunition that is unregulated, unchecked, and unjustified. We need to restore rigorous background checks to keep dangerous weapons away from criminals and the mentally ill. We need to close the gun show loophole. We need to facilitate database sharing among law enforcement agencies—Federal, State, and local.

Next step: limit access to weapons of mass killing. No hunter needs an Uzi; no citizen needs an assault-style weapon for self-defense. No other civilized society has allowed the argument that any restriction of any kind is a direct assault on our personal liberty, except us.

Next: require registration and stiff penalties for failure to secure dangerous weapons in the home or workplace while banning their presence in a select number of public places such as churches, police stations, mental health facilities, recreation and youth centers, government buildings, and—oh, yes—schools.

The gun lobby has bullied and intimidated us for too long. Reasonable gun control measures like those just listed provide for public safety; they don't threaten it. The lobby loves to fall back on trite mantras that unfortunately have proved all too effective in silencing any meaningful public debate heretofore: "Guns don't kill; people do." "Any restriction real or imagined contravenes my Second Amendment rights to bear arms."

Oh, really?

Even Justice Scalia, in writing his unprecedented and deeply flawed Heller opinion, acknowledged that it did not preclude reasonable gun control measures. Even Scalia has had to admit in his originalist interpretation of the Second Amendment he cannot answer whether the Constitution envisioned a universal right to possess rocket launchers, RPGs, stinger missiles, or military assault weapons in our homes. That is the logical fallacy and folly of the argument of unrestricted rights to bear arms without limit. Its proponents allow for no check on this right in the Constitution. Even the First Amendment has limitations. So does this one.

We've been lulled into a passivity and fatalism with the logical fallacies and sometimes thuggish tactics of the gun lobby and its extreme right-wing allies at a terrible cost. Each year, guns kill