

The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of the proceedings is in violation of the rules of House.

THE HELPING FAMILIES IN MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS ACT

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

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, in a couple of days we will have a moment of silence in respect and memory of the victims of Sandy Hook Elementary. We need to take those moments to pause, reflect, and pray.

However, afterwards, we cannot be silent on the need to get something done, on the need to pass comprehensive and meaningful legislation, and the need to help the mentally ill.

Has the world changed since Newtown and the other tragedies?

Sadly, little has been done to get those who need help the help they need. In the past few decades, this Nation has moved forward in knowledge of what it takes to help, but has moved backward in getting the help done. And where there is no help, there is no hope.

We have fewer psychiatric hospital beds, fewer outpatient treatment options, restrictions on the use of medications that can and do help those who are mentally ill, too few psychiatrists and psychologists and clinical social workers, especially child and adolescent specialists, and especially ones who are trained and specialize in treating the seriously mentally ill.

We have too many barriers that prevent doctors from communicating with parents of the sons and daughters with persistent serious mental illness.

We have Federal barriers that block treatment, Federal dollars that go to grants for programs that do not work. The National Institute of Mental Health has insufficient money to engage in needed research.

First responders who are called to deal with mental health crises have little or no training on what to do, and they miss critically important actions.

Treatment delayed is treatment denied; and where there is no help, there is no hope.

Today, I am introducing the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act. It increases access to trained professionals at community health centers and community mental health centers, and refocuses the government spending on programs that work and gets to the people that need it in communities and not remain in bureaucracies.

It reforms government spending to eliminate redundancy and waste and refocuses us on getting evidence-based help. It brings scientific objectivity to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

It opens up the door of communication between doctors and parents and legal guardians of those with mental illness. It increases inpatient treatment options and availability. No more being told that there are no more beds. Take your son or daughter home, no matter how much they are at risk of hurting you or themselves.

It increases outpatient treatment options. It increases pharmaceutical treatment options. It reduces the warehousing of our persistently and seriously mentally ill in jails or homelessness.

It improves communication between primary care providers, psychiatrists, psychologists, and licensed mental health practitioners. It increases mental health courts. It provides training for first responders, and it gathers essential and critically important information on the relationship between mental illness and violence and victimization.

Bottom line: if we want to change these trends in victimization of the mentally ill and the persistently mentally ill; if we want to reduce the high number of suicides, homicide and assaults; if we want to get people treatment, not jail time, and not abandonment; if we want to help the tens of millions of people with mental illness and the hundreds of millions of friends and relatives who are emotionally and financially strained by the untreated problems of mental illness; if we want to prevent the Newtowns, Tucsons, Auroras, Pittsburghs, and Columbines, we have to do something comprehensive, research based, and we have to do it now.

What we need is not only for Congress to act, but during these next few weeks, while Congressmen and -women are back home, we need to hear from every doctor and first responder and teacher and parent and patient and consumer that we must act thoroughly and thoughtfully and must act now.

Those who need the help the most have the most trouble getting the help they need, and where there is no help there is no hope. We can and must and we will take mental illness out of the shadows of ignorance, despair, and neglect, and into that bright light of hope.

So I ask my colleagues to support this bill, the Helping Families and Mental Health Crisis Act, because treatment and action delayed is treatment denied.

Let us help American families get the help they need because where there is no help, there is no hope.

THE MOST UNACCOMPLISHED CONGRESS IN THE HISTORY OF THIS COUNTRY

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

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, we are in the closing hours of the first year of the 113th Con-

gress, and the pundits who examine Congresses past and present have concluded that this is the most unaccomplished Congress in the history of the country.

We have passed a total of 56 bills here in this Congress. The fact is, we have taken 239 days off, and we have worked 133 days. And let's be honest with ourselves here: those 133 days often included a Monday or a Tuesday where we came in at 6:30 in the evening and took a handful of votes on some non-controversial issues. Where most of us come from, that is not a day's work.

And by the same token, more often than not, we left on a Thursday or a Friday, somewhere after taking a few votes that morning, and then heading back to wherever we were headed.

Back in 1948, Harry Truman got elected President of the United States by campaigning against the do-nothing 80th Congress in 1948. Well, guess what, that Congress passed over 900 bills. And we are looking at 56 here at the halfway mark?

I cannot begin to imagine how history is going to evaluate this Congress. The Wall Street Journal said:

This Congress is long on partisanship, indecision, and brinksmanship.

Others have constantly referred to the fact that most of what is done here and considered here in the past year has been political posturing in preparation for the next election.

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To be fair, we have accomplished some things here: the middle-class tax cut, Hurricane Sandy relief, the Violence Against Women Act. We passed a couple of appropriations bills, and we may be on the brink here of actually passing a budget bill, which would be most important and quite an accomplishment. Not to mention, we formally recognized Soap Box Derby Day, and we have made it possible for hunters to buy their duck stamps online.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that we are not getting the job done. And the fact also remains that, in this country, the rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer, and the middle class in this country is getting crushed. We are looking at large deficits and broken priorities and a broken government, and we are not addressing those issues of our time.

I did a little research. I have the unique perspective of having served some 32 years ago, and at that time we had between 7,000 and 8,000 subcommittee, full committee, conference committee hearings, markups, and meetings. This Congress, by contrast, has had 500, and most of those were procedural and Rules Committee meetings.

The Speaker himself said that we need to return to regular order in this country if we are going to get things done. "Regular order," for those who don't know, means going to work 5 days a week, like everybody else in America. It means working full days. It