

the highest ratio of Blacks to Whites in the country.

He was right, 57 percent.

We have no skinheads, we have no real KKK, no one doing anything but talking on the Internet. Well, someone has to have the bravery to take it to the real world, and I guess that has to be me.

Mr. Speaker, bigotry continues to exist in this country. This Congress should not pass any legislation, today or any other day, that would embolden those who continue to hold racist beliefs.

The Calvert amendment—the Calvert amendment—is misguided, and it emboldens bigotry. I ask my colleagues, Democrat and Republican, respectfully, let's defeat the Calvert amendment this afternoon, and even if the gentleman would consider to withdraw his amendment and not put this House through this turmoil today.

#### 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, yesterday, in a terrible attack, over 200 people were killed across these United States. This headline should lead every TV news show, hit the front pages, and generate outrage from across the country, but it did not appear. This is not make-believe. The news is real, but no one reported it.

We lose more than 80,000 people a year now to suicide and drug addiction overdose. That is over 200 people a day. Where is the news?

Now, these are the sudden and tragic deaths. Then there are the slow-motion deaths which we can't even count, those who have a mental illness and ended up homeless, or have a co-occurring chronic illness, such as diabetes or heart disease, and face that slow-motion death sentence. In fact, people with serious mental illness tend to die 25 years earlier than their cohorts.

And then there are the mentally ill who are victims of attacks. Last week, The Washington Post revealed how, in the first 6 months of this year, a person who was in mental health crisis was shot and killed every 36 hours by police. The vast majority were armed, but, in most cases, the police officers who shot them were not responding to reports of a crime. More often, they were called by relatives, neighbors, or other bystanders, worried that a mentally fragile person was behaving erratically. The crisis built, and it ended in death.

Further, the mentally ill are more likely to be the victims of violence, robberies, beatings, rape, and other crimes. These individuals are also 10 times more likely to be in jail than in a hospital.

If you are a minority, chances are your mental health treatment comes in a prison, not in a community health center.

Have we become so numb we no longer notice? Are we so numb, we no longer care?

Tragically, government tries to help, but, frankly, it is a mess. The chaotic patchwork of current government programs and Federal laws make it impossible for those with severe psychosis, schizophrenia, and serious mental illness, to get meaningful care.

For example, when someone with serious mental illness is haunted by delirium and hallucinations and doesn't even know they are ill, they frequently stop taking their needed medication. They don't follow up on appointments and their health declines. Our Federal laws prevent a caregiver from getting their loved one to the next appointment or to follow up on their care.

We need to provide treatment before tragedy and get these individuals help before their loved ones dial 911. The Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act, H.R. 2646, provides millions of families the tools needed for effective care.

H.R. 2646 empowers parents and caregivers to access care before the mental illness reaches the most severe stage. It fixes the shortage of inpatient beds, so patients in mental health crisis can get proper care, not be sent to a jail, not tied to an emergency room gurney, and not sent home.

It helps reach underserved and rural populations. It expands the mental health workforce. It drives evidence-based care. It provides alternatives to institutionalization. It integrates primary and behavior care.

It increases physician volunteerism, advances critical medical research, brings accountability to mental health and substance abuse parity, and it also provides crisis intervention grants for police officers and first responders. This training helps law enforcement officials recognize individuals who have a serious mental illness and learn how to properly intervene.

My bill eliminates wasteful and ineffective programs and directs money where it is needed most. It restructures the Federal mental health system to focus on serious mental illness rather than behavioral wellness and feel-good fads that yield no meaningful results yet cost taxpayers millions each year.

My bill elevates effective programs and helps communities adopt programs to stop the revolving door of mental health crisis, violence, incarceration, ER visits, and abandonment.

This bipartisan legislation, now with more than 50 cosponsors, marks a new dawn for mental health in America. I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort by cosponsoring the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act, H.R. 2646. Let's no longer turn a blind eye and, instead, help those that need it the most.

Whether on the fast road or the slow road, the 200-plus deaths per day, the 80,000 deaths per year and unknown number of victims is far, far too many. Compassion calls us to act—and act

now. The cost of delay is deadly. For those families who are suffering, how can we look them in the eye and defend our delays to act?

#### CONFEDERATE FLAG AMENDMENTS

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, there are days in this House when morality and the values of our country, as articulated in the Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution of our country, summon us to vote as Americans, as moral representatives, and as representatives of the values of our country. Today is such a day, my colleagues.

Three Democratic amendments were adopted earlier in the consideration of the Interior bill that would end the practice of displaying or selling Confederate battle flags and flag merchandise in national parks and National Park Service cemeteries. Those amendments were adopted by voice vote. They reflect the strong consensus in this country and, hopefully, in this Congress, that a symbol of slavery, secession, segregation, and secession has no place in our national parks or in the cemeteries whose grounds have been hallowed by the veterans who rest there after having served and given their lives in defense of freedom and justice and the values of our country.

Unbelievably, however, Mr. Speaker, several hours ago, in the dark of night, the chairman of the Interior Subcommittee offered an amendment on this floor that would effectively strike those amendments which surely reflect the values to which all of us have risen our hand and sworn to protect.

Today, on the anniversary of the ratification of the 14th Amendment to our Constitution—how ironic that we would meet this vote on this day—which enshrined the principle of equality for all Americans, we have this shameful Confederate battle flag amendment on our floor.

This amendment would keep in place a policy that allows Confederate battle flags in our national parks and National Park Service cemeteries, a symbol, as my colleague JIM CLYBURN, the assistant leader and the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus and an extraordinary Representative in South Carolina, said yesterday was so offensive and hurtful to so many millions of our fellow citizens and our fellow colleagues in this body.

Even in South Carolina today, where the Confederacy was born, that flag is being taken down from the State capitol grounds after both Republican-controlled houses of that State's assembly voted to remove it.

Certainly—certainly—on this day we ought not to see a Republican-led Congress move in the opposite direction. My colleagues, together, not as Republicans and Democrats, but as Americans deeply committed to the values of