

guns without a background check. They want medical experts and their government to research this plague of gun violence for what it is: a public health crisis. They want to keep guns out of the hands of terrorists on the no-fly list.

Why is it that when someone poses a credible national security threat, we ensure that they cannot fly on a plane, but they can still purchase a firearm?

With each second that passes without action, we are risking another Devon Quinn, another Hadiya Pendleton, another Blair Holt. We are risking another Orlando, another Sandy Hook, another Virginia Tech.

So I ask my colleagues: Just who exactly has to die and how many before we finally put an end to this? Just how many birthdays, Father's Days, Mother's Days must go uncelebrated? How many would-be graduations must pass? How many empty chairs at a kitchen table must there be before we show courage and say "enough" and take action to pass measures that keep us safe instead of going on with our violence?

It is deafening. Bring these bills to the floor.

GUN VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning in solidarity with my colleagues about the mass shootings that are going on in our country.

The Orlando mass shooting has been another demonstration for some Americans of an ongoing daily violence and daily nightmare: gun violence in our country.

Now, we all know that there is a systemic problem for many in our communities of lack in opportunities: lack of education, adequate after-school and summer programs, job training, expansion of economic opportunities. But we know measures that will help to increase funding for these programs will never reach this floor.

We know also that Republicans refuse to take up other measures as well. What they can address right now, right here, is expanded background checks, prevention of gun sales to those on a no-fly list, and a ban on assault weapons.

Now, I grew up fishing and hunting with my dad. I passed that on to my children. So owning a gun is not something that I believe should not happen, but I know that it is not an absolute right.

As the granddaughter of a police commissioner, the daughter of a New York City cop, a former Bronx prosecutor, and a Justice Department official, the war on crime, the war on these mass shootings and destruction would be well served by voting on expanded background checks, prevention of gun sales to those on the no-fly list, and a ban on assault weapons.

On the small islands that I represent, the U.S. Virgin Islands, there have been over 300 gun-related deaths over the last 5 years. For a place with a population of 100,000, to have 300 gun-related deaths in 3 years accounts for a murder rate and a death per capita that is several times the national average.

Now, much of this is through a lack of opportunity, but also—and absolutely—the influx of illegal assaults weapons, such as high-caliber weapons of mass murder, that come into the market. Those, coupled, in our instance, with the drug trade, have left our community in fear and mourning for our young.

Last year alone, there were twice as many gun deaths per capita in the Virgin Islands than there were in most American cities that we could traditionally think of as having a high gun rate.

Who are the victims of the destruction just this year in the Virgin Islands?

I am going to name them because we never hear names like this. We have our moments of silence for the large groups, but these are the day-to-day individuals that died:

January 9, two unnamed males; January 20, Stephen Coleman and Heidi Mills; January 21, Tishawn Samuel, 24; February 2, Juan Encarnacion, 30; March 5, Evan Ezekiel Joseph, 38; March 8, Conrad Phipps, 30; March 22, Kishawn Fleming, 23; March 27, Hans Oliver, 38; March 28, Kayan Payne and Kanta Payne, 33 and 29; April 19, Joseph duCreay, 19; April 28, Javan Benjamin, 22; May 1, Shedale Gabriel, 25; May 22, Vershawn Monsanto, 21; June 4, Shaki Alexander, 21, and Kerven Joseph 19; June 12, Ojahnia Adkins, 22, and Jahfari Samuel, 34; June 20, Devon Freeman, 42.

The blood of these victims speak to me. I hope, Mr. Speaker, it speaks to you. Bring the bills to the floor. Vote it up or vote it down, but do your job.

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LET'S DO SOMETHING TO PROTECT THE CHILDREN OF AMERICA

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

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, pretty much everything has been said, except I think, obviously, the leadership is still not hearing us. And it is not just us who are saying this; the American people are saying this.

Everyone has seen the polls. Everyone knows the reality that, in the last couple of weeks, 90 percent of the American people want us to do very simple things: no fly, no buy and closing gaping, not small, but gaping loopholes in the background check.

Now, like some of my colleagues, I personally would go further. My con-

stituents would support that. There are many things we could be doing, but we are not asking for those things because we know that is a difficult lift in the House of Representatives.

But I represent the same number of people as every other Member here, about 750,000 people. And when 90 percent of those constituents in every district wants us to take simple, direct action, I think it is a dereliction of duty and responsibility and our oath to ignore that unless there is some moral reason for us to disagree with some constituents. On this issue, I can't believe anyone has a moral disagreement with this.

Everyone's talking about Orlando, and that is obviously the most important, most compelling one. But since the Orlando shooting, in the last 10 days, the last 10 days in America, there have been 77 people, at least, killed with guns—at least.

And I say that because many of these things get minimal reporting. Why? Because all of us are used to turning on the local news in every corner of this country every single night and seeing another act of violence, almost always committed with a gun, across America. It is not an urban problem or a rural problem; it is across the country. And we have become a little desensitized to it because it happens all the time.

Once in a while, we will get an Orlando tragedy or a Sandy Hook tragedy, and we will all jump up and down and say how upset we are. But, as has been pointed out many times, we don't seem to get all that upset when two or three people get shot in the middle of some other place.

Sometimes, we think: well, it is probably just gang violence. It is just one gang member shooting another gang member. Maybe they deserve it. America is better off.

How do you say that when there is a 3-year-old who gets shot, or a 7-year-old? How dare you say that. Or a woman walking down the street, or people literally just sitting in their homes innocently.

People say that some of the proposals that have been made wouldn't have stopped Orlando or wouldn't have stopped Sandy Hook or wouldn't have stopped something else. You know what? Maybe they are right. I don't know. But I have never in my life, either politically or personally, used the excuse that because I can't do everything that, therefore, I should do nothing. That is nothing more than a lame excuse.

If we can save the life of one person by taking simple actions that everybody seems to agree with—if you can't fly, you can't buy a gun; close the loopholes in background checks—no one has a problem with background checks.

Most Americans don't know there are loopholes. And I don't mean little ones. I mean gaping ones. As you heard earlier, about 40 percent of the guns sold in this country are not subject to background checks. That is not a loophole. That is a gaping loophole.