

more important thing do our Republican colleagues have to do than to be in session, to do their job, for us all to do our job for the American people?

We should be here to do our job on Zika, which the President over 4 months ago requested funding to fight Zika, and now it is spreading in our country.

We should be here for funding for opioids. We passed a wonderful bill—good policy, but no funding; therefore, not effective.

We should be here to pass the funding for opioids and Flint, Michigan. What more important thing do you have to do, my colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle, than to meet the needs of the children of Flint, Michigan?

Here we are, continuing to have our conversation about commonsense gun violence protection.

I want to quote from President Lyndon Johnson. In the aftermath of the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy, just weeks after the fatal shooting of Martin Luther King, Jr., and only a few years after President John F. Kennedy was shot, President Johnson pressed Congress to enact gun control legislation that he sent to Capitol Hill years earlier. He had sent it after the Kennedy assassination.

LBJ ordered all of his staff and urged allies in Congress to act swiftly. Here is what he said that was as relevant now as it was then. President Lyndon Johnson, following the deaths of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, said: "We only have 2 weeks, maybe only 10 days, before the gun lobby gets organized. We've got to beat the NRA into the offices of Members of Congress."

Decades. This has been going on for decades. When a President of the United States, after the assassination of a President; an icon, Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.; Senator Robert Kennedy—well, actually he was a candidate for President at the time, Senator Kennedy was. "We've got to beat the NRA into the offices of Members of Congress." Well, obviously, we haven't, because they sort of live there. They sort of live there.

And when he signed the watered-down version of the bill he proposed, he said, "The voices that blocked these safeguards were not the voices of an aroused nation. They were the voices of a powerful gun lobby, a gun lobby that has prevailed for the moment in an election year." Sound familiar?

LBJ went on to say, "We have been through a great deal of anguish these last few months and these last few years—too much anguish to forget so quickly. So now we must complete the task which this long-needed legislation begins."

Here we are decades later, still recognizing the fact that the National Rifle Association, the gun lobby, has so much power over Members of Congress. It has so much power over their political survival, some of our colleagues think.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker: What is more important, the political survival of Members of Congress beholden to the gun lobby or the survival of little kindergarten students in Newtown, Connecticut? What is more important, the political survival of Members of Congress or the personal survival of members gathered in church in South Carolina, or young people gathered for an evening of fun in Orlando—the list goes on and on—or our dear police officers killed in Dallas.

What is it? How do you explain it to people, except to say there is a large element of cowardice. There is a large element of putting people's own political survival over the oath of office that we take to protect the American people.

Excuse me. This is so emotional.

I salute my colleague Congresswoman BEATTY for her very passionate and intellectual statement that she made in recognizing the role of athletes. I am very proud of the Golden State Warriors. They have long been involved in this, as has the NBA and the players that she mentioned. This was another venue for them to speak out. They have been eloquent on the subject for a while.

I salute my colleague Mr. CICILLINE, not only for his work on gun issues, but on hate crimes as well, because that was a hate crime in Orlando.

Mr. CLYBURN is going to be outside on the steps of the Capitol with a large crowd of people so we can listen to the stories of those affected. If only our colleagues would open their hearts and their minds and not have a tin ear to the voices of the families, listen to the families.

One of our own colleagues, Congressman BOBBY RUSH of Illinois, he and his family are survivors of the death of their son. When he tells the story of how he learned of his son being shot but then of his son passing, it is so eloquent and so compelling. And he talks about the shriek, the cry, the scream of a mother who has just found out that her child is dead from a gunshot.

How much of this can we take? It is always impressive, I have to say, to witness the degree of tolerance that our colleagues have for the pain of others. How much pain do people have to suffer for people to hear, to learn, to judge?

Was it George Bernard Shaw who said the sign of a truly intelligent person is that he is informed by statistics? The statistics are overwhelming: 91 a day; over 1,000 mass murders, which is defined as 4 or more people being slaughtered in 1 incident—all of that since Newtown.

□ 1800

I know my time is drawing short, but I will just say this: these are statistics. More important than that, they are human lives.

How many more human lives? How many shrieks of mothers learning—and dads as well.

He spoke of hearing his wife's shriek; the piercing sound of a mother's scream.

I heard one of the mothers from Orlando when she was suspicious that her son might have been killed. She said: I don't know. We don't have any evidence, but nobody has seen him. He isn't at the hospital. I am afraid I have become a member of the club, the club of women, moms who have lost their children. It is a terrible club to be a member of, and I want to speak out against gun violence so that there aren't more moms added to the club.

But that doesn't seem to resonate with our colleagues. They don't even give the courtesy of attendance to hear the concerns that people have.

Is it indifference? Do they not know or do they not care? Or is it some combination?

Whatever it is, it is a disgrace to our oath of office to protect the American people.

Be assured of this, be assured of this: we are not going away. You will see us. You will see the faces of those moms, all the organizations that have come together, the millions of people, the high percentages, 85, 90 percent of the American people of all parties and no parties who support the legislation that we are asking for. We are not going away until we have commonsense gun violence prevention laws passed in our country to save lives, to save lives. That is the challenge we offer to our Republican colleagues.

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

REQUEST TO BE GRANTED ADDITIONAL SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that we have an additional hour to continue to speak about the urgency of gun violence prevention action. We have many Democratic colleagues who are here who are seeking time to implore the Speaker to come back.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair cannot entertain that request.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. CICILLINE. Point of parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, why is the Chair not capable of entertaining a request for unanimous consent to provide for additional time to address this urgent public health crisis?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Speaker's announced policy on Special Order Speeches does not allow the Chair to entertain that request.

GUN VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS) for 30 minutes.