

loopholes, and improving mental health services when, in reality, it is also about economic opportunity, building trust between the community and law enforcement, as well as passing these commonsense gun violence prevention measures.

In April, I launched the Urban Progress, or UP, Initiative to address these root causes of gun violence. UP partners with local community leaders, activists, business leaders, and elected officials to promote economic opportunity, improve community policing, and build on commonsense gun violence prevention strategies.

With the input from the UP Initiative partners and many of my colleagues here in the House, I introduced the Urban Progress Act, a bill that would ensure that the Federal Government remains committed to reducing the gun violence ravaging our communities.

My bill would reinvest in our economically underserved communities, take steps to restore the vital trust between law enforcement officers and the community, and would keep guns out of the hands of those seeking to do harm.

Mr. Speaker, let's talk about these issues in my bill. Let's debate them. Let's vote on them. I urge my colleagues to listen to the American people.

Lastly, I am outraged that anyone would accuse the President of starting any type of racial issue. The President has spoken about gun violence prevention and preventing cops from getting killed and preventing innocent people from getting killed also, so I am outraged to hear these statements.

SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

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

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, since September 1, the first day of National Suicide Prevention Month, 944 Americans have died by suicide, including 160 veterans.

Since the passage of H.R. 2646, the mental health reform act, in the House of Representatives in July, 7,552 Americans have died from suicide, including 1,280 veterans.

I had the honor of meeting the parents of Sergeant Daniel Somers, who served bravely in Operation Iraqi Freedom. On June 13, 2013, Daniel took his own life after suffering from PTSD and traumatic brain injury. His family is heartbroken.

He left a letter for his family before he took his own life, and I would like to share his words. He wrote:

I am sorry that it has come to this. The fact is, for as long as I can remember, my motivation for getting up every day has been so that you would not have to bury me. As things have continued to get worse, it has become clear that this alone is not a sufficient reason to carry on.

The fact is I am not getting better, I am not going to get any better, and I will most certainly deteriorate further as time goes on. From a logical standpoint, it is better to simply end things quickly and let any repercussions from that play out in the short term than to drag things out into the long term.

I really have been trying to hang on for more than a decade now. Each day has been a testament to the extent to which I cared, suffering unspeakable horror as quietly as possible so that you could feel as though I was still here for you. In truth, I was nothing more than a prop, filling space so that my absence would not be noted. In truth, I have already been absent for a long, long time.

My body has become nothing but a cage, a source of pain and constant problems . . . It is nothing short of torture. My mind is a wasteland, filled with visions of incredible horror, unceasing depression, and crippling anxiety.

Is it any wonder then that the latest figures show 22 veterans killing themselves each day? That is more veterans than children who were killed at Sandy Hook every single day. Where are the huge policy initiatives?

Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a letter that did not have to be written. I can't even imagine the grief of the parents of Daniel, but I also know that they want to spare other parents the same kind of grief.

I continue to practice psychology at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center at Bethesda. I work with veterans who, like Daniel, suffer from depression and PTSD and traumatic brain injury. I have seen firsthand that, with treatment, these soldiers can and do get better.

When our brave men and women come home, they and their families deserve better care. Yet we do not have enough crisis psychiatric hospital beds. Half the counties in America have no psychiatrists or no psychologists. And for every 1,000 people with an addiction disorder, only 6—only 6—get evidence-based care, and families are blocked from helping by a massive bureaucracy.

So we can read more sad letters like Daniel's, or we can act. The House answered that call on July 6, 2016, when we passed, by a near-unanimous vote, H.R. 2646, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act. But it only works and it only gives help if it is signed into law.

I don't want any more moments of silence for Daniel or the thousands of other veterans or citizens who have died by suicide. We don't need more moments of silence. We need times of action. Those moments of silence are a slap in the face to the mothers and fathers who struggle to get help for their sons and daughters.

So I ask: How can the Senate even contemplate the talk of going home before this is passed with this death toll climbing, even when they have the solution in their hands?

Indecision and politics are overruling compassion and common sense. What about veterans like Daniel, for whom help never came?

On behalf of those silenced voices, I call upon the Senate to take action and

pass H.R. 2646 before they go home at the end of September. We must have treatment before tragedy. We must provide mental health support. After all, 90 percent of suicide deaths have a co-occurring mental illness. Otherwise, what will we tell those family members who find the next suicide note, that when there was a chance to act, Congress went home?

These veterans will never go home. These thousands of other people who commit suicide, nonveterans, will never go home again, and the Senate should not go home again in September without passing H.R. 2646.

Remember, where there is help, there is hope.

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to follow my good friend, Dr. MURPHY, on the floor. I appreciate his tireless efforts in terms of mental health and of suicide prevention. I was pleased this week to introduce with him legislation to recognize September as National Suicide Prevention Month.

We have this ritual of designating certain days, weeks, and months in honor of issues that can be momentous and sometimes arcane, but this one is existential.

We are looking at a time of great division not just in Congress but in American society. Suicide prevention ought to be a great unifier. We lose five lives every hour to a cause that is usually treatable and often preventable. The nature of the suicide epidemic, which has been increasing every year for the last decade, has the power to unite and bring people together to make a difference.

I applaud him for his work on the mental health legislation. I hope that we are all encouraged and emboldened, particularly as relates to our veterans, and his work there is commendable.

We are losing a veteran almost every hour to suicide. It is also the second leading cause of death among young people ages 10 to 34, yet people who commit suicide almost always show symptoms that could be diagnosed and treated.

In addition to the tragic disruption on individuals and families, it is estimated that suicide results in \$44 billion in combined economic and work costs. It is a national crisis and a tragedy that has touched almost every family I know.

The area of suicide prevention is one of shared passions that can contribute to solutions. For mental health professionals, it is rich with possibilities. If you are concerned about gun violence, this is an area of opportunity. Those who attempt suicide with a firearm are successful about 85 percent of the time.

Drug and alcohol abuse is a factor in many cases. Due to the underlying substance abuse or issues, individual actions can be clouded by the influence of drug or alcohol when suicide is attempted.

There is a role for each and every one of us to play as advocates, as individuals, for treatment and suicide prevention counseling, recovery, and to support the grief of the family members left behind.

I am excited about the network of organizations across the country, often with major volunteer input, who are making a difference. I visited one recently in my community, Lines for Life, that has volunteers manning 24-hour phone lines to help people in a time of crisis.

□ 1045

It is overseen by licensed clinicians. This one volunteer-driven organization handles nearly 55,000 calls per year, offering immediate assistance to people who want to overcome substance abuse, prevent suicide, and find treatment for happier, more productive lives.

Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful that we will, in fact, designate September as Suicide Prevention Month, but that every month will be Suicide Prevention Month and that we will all rededicate ourselves to combating this epidemic that touches lives in every one of our communities.

THE SIMPLE ACT

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

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Streamlining Income-Driven, Manageable Payments on Loans for Education Act or, more simply, the SIMPLE Act.

I first want to thank Congresswoman SUZANNE BONAMICI for her leadership and hard work on this bill, which I am proud to introduce with her today.

Education is an area where we should be focused on bipartisan solutions because every Pennsylvanian—indeed, every American—deserves the opportunity to succeed, and that path to success starts with an education.

Many of my constituents have expressed concerns about the cost of a college education, including making payments on their student loans after they graduate. The challenge of how to responsibly manage student debt makes this bill so important.

The SIMPLE Act would assist millions of Americans who carry student loan debt. For many young people, student loan debt is the first type of debt they incur, but it can leave them unable to invest in their future, despite being employed and working hard.

Consider that borrowers who miss payments may face lifelong ramifications that make it more expensive and, in some cases, prohibitive to rent an apartment or purchase a home or a car.

Our bill would assist borrowers on the verge of default by notifying them of more affordable repayment plans. “The SIMPLE Act establishes processes to automatically enroll severely delinquent borrowers in income-driven repayment plans with low monthly payments. The legislation also automates the annual process for updating income information while enrolled in these plans, ensuring that borrowers continue to make affordable payments.”

“This measure uses the information borrowers already have on file at the Internal Revenue Service to eliminate the obstacles to enrolling in an affordable repayment plan and lets borrowers benefit from lower monthly payments.” But even those enrolled in affordable repayment plans face the paperwork hassle of a complicated process of having to annually recertify their income to keep their low payment. Failure to promptly recertify can, as I mentioned, result in substantial economic detriment. That is, again, why our legislation will responsibly relieve some of that burden by automatically updating a borrower’s income.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill. It will assist borrowers in getting back on track and, in turn, reduce the negative impact of a missed loan payment.

RECOGNIZING 95 YEARS OF EXEMPLARY SERVICE OF THE LIMERICK FIRE COMPANY

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize 95 years of exemplary service to the 14,000 residents of Limerick Township, Montgomery County, by the Limerick Township Fire Company.

Organized in 1921 and chartered in 1927, its now 250 members and 35 active firefighters are doing a tremendous job in keeping Limerick Township safe, dedicating thousands of hours every year.

I want to thank the company president, Tom Walters, and all the members of the Limerick Township Fire Department for the great work that they do. I wish them the very best for the next 95 years of service to the Limerick Township Fire Company and beyond.

JULY’S VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE

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

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, the minority has for many months now begged and pleaded to have a bill come to this floor for a vote on gun violence prevention. We have even had a sit-in. But all that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are willing to do is have moments of silence and then be silent.

The only moments of silence are for those names that are in the headlines. That is not good enough. All of the deaths matter, and all of the deaths from mass shootings in the month of July deserve to be recognized by all of us.

So as I have done each month since the beginning of this year, I will now read the names of all those who were killed in mass shootings in the month of July:

Alex Freeman, 28, and Marcus Cal, also 28, were killed on July 4 in Chattanooga.

Armando Cardona, 45, and Naome Innis, 35, were killed on July 4 in Phoenix.

Charles Jackson, 28, Jamal Dataunte Dixon-Lackey, 26, and Daquarius Tucker, 19, were killed at a Fourth of July block party in Houston, Texas. Daquarius’ brother was also shot and killed this summer. Police said both brothers were innocent bystanders.

Demetrius Grant, 39, was killed at a party on July 5 in LA.

Jeffrey Adams, 52, was killed by his neighbor on July 5 in Hiram, Georgia.

Jennifer Rooney, 44, was killed by a mass shooter while driving on July 7 in Bristol, Tennessee.

Five Dallas police officers—Brent Thompson, Patrick Zamarripa, Michael Krol, Michael Smith, and Lorne Aherns—were killed in the line of duty on July 7 in Dallas, Texas.

Domingo Rodriguez Rhines, 40, was killed in Shreveport, Louisiana.

Joseph Zangaro, 61, and Ron Kienzle, 60, both court bailiffs, were killed by an escaping suspect on July 11 in St. Joseph, Michigan.

Jacara Sproaps, 38, and Maurice Partlow, 40, were killed by Jacara’s ex-boyfriend on July 13 in St. Louis, Missouri. Jacara was an elementary school principal beloved by the community.

Eric Gaiter, 22, was killed July 14 in Akron, Ohio, while at a vigil for another gun violence victim.

Three unidentified people were killed at a home in Crosby, Texas.

Joseph Lamar, 38, Janell Renee Knight, 43, and Zachary David Thompson, 36, were killed by their friend on July 15 in Woodland, Washington.

Miguel Bravo, 21, was killed when gunmen open-fired on the house party next door on July 16 in Bakersfield, California.

Three police officers, Montrell Jackson, 32, Matthew Gerald, 41, and Brad Garafola, 45, were killed in the line of duty on July 17 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Edward James Long, 49, was killed on July 17 in Houston, Texas, while standing outside a Walgreens.

Bobbie Odneal, III, 23, and Rickey McGowan, 25, were killed on July 23 at a nightclub in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Erica Rodriguez, 21, her 3-year-old son, and Paula Nino, 20, were killed by Erica’s boyfriend on July 23 in Bastrop, Texas.

Kalif Goens, 22, was killed by his brother on July 24 in a bar in Hamilton, Ohio.

Sean Archilles, 14, and Stef’an Strawder, 18, were killed outside an under-18 club on July 25 in Fort Myers, Florida.

Denzel Childs, 25, and Kayana Armond, 34, were killed on July 28 at a