

down. We are a great country. But one of the reasons that we are so great is that we always strive to be better.

I can't think of doing anything more important or better than treating all of our citizens equally and allowing them to have the same equal opportunity under our great flag and under our great Constitution. It is long past due to put women in the Constitution.

I hope my colleagues will join me in helping to make this dream of equality a reality in the great country of the United States of America.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from New York. I welcome our partnership on this endeavor. We committed to one another that we are going to continue to raise the issue of the ERA on a monthly basis so that people will be reawakened to just how significant and important this is.

I was very struck by the information that she shared with us with regard to the unequal pay as it relates to women versus men. While we cited sort of the general knowledge or norm that is associated with the ERA and with unequal pay, we recognize that there is an even greater disparity when it comes to African American women and Latin women to the tune of 63 cents on the dollar and 54 cents on the dollar.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), who is also a fierce fighter for equality for all people.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as I listened to Congresswoman MALONEY, I heard her mention the Constitution and the importance of the Equal Rights Amendment and I am reminded of the constitutional amendment that was needed in 1920 to allow women the right to vote.

If you took a broad assessment of the American people, they might allude to women have the right to vote. But what I would offer to say to them is that every time we wanted to be sure of a right given to a left-out group, we had to add to the Bill of Rights.

□ 1730

The Bill of Rights includes the Fifth Amendment, which is the protection of our property and due process. It includes the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, which codify, constitutionally, the wrongness of slavery and the concept of equal protection under the law. But in all of that, it has not protected women in their rightful place in this society to have a legal basis to object to unequal pay. It did not provide the cover for Lilly Ledbetter, who went to protest the fact that she was paid less and was not given any respect by the employer who felt that there were no laws that protected her.

I believe that, in all of my tenure in Congress, I have supported the Equal Rights Amendment legislation. So I just answer today, for those who may be querying "here they come again" or "they already have a Bill of Rights" or "they have the amendment allowing

them to vote," yes, we have sectors of rights—the right to vote—and maybe we join in and have the right to due process.

What the Equal Rights Amendment does is it pierces the veil of governmental leadership and governance, and it says to the 50 States: you must adhere to the Constitution as it is related to women and that, with every aspect of governmental action that impacts women, without discrimination against men, you must put them on an equal footing.

We have title VII and we have title IX; but, Mr. Speaker, in spite of those statutes, women are still discriminated against because you can't section off their rights and expect all of their rights to be protected. Discrimination under title VII fits one box, and title IX, with athletics, fits another box. Then, for some reason, we have all of these different aspects that seem either not to prevail under lawsuits under title VII or not to prevail under lawsuits under title IX, but women are still discriminated against.

If there were an amendment that would cover all aspects of governance that States had to adhere to, that counties had to adhere to, that cities had to adhere to, and that, certainly, the Federal Government had to adhere to, because the Constitution is the Constitution of the United States for all people, then we would see the lifting of those issues that impact women and that are not clarified through the statutory process.

I rise today again to support the movement of this bill through the Judiciary Committee, to the floor of the House, and, ultimately, through the Senate. For my colleagues, many of you know that there is a constitutional process that would engage the States. Then, ultimately, that would become an amendment to the United States Constitution. What better process of engaging the people of the United States in determining whether they want and recognize the importance of an Equal Rights Amendment than the process of amending the Constitution of the United States.

I finish by saying we are doing what is right, and I am hoping that its conclusion will be in short order on behalf of the women and the men and the families of this great United States of America.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. I thank the gentlewoman from Texas for joining us in this discussion as well.

Mr. Speaker, it has been almost a century; so the time for the ERA is right now.

I yield back the balance of my time.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK: BLUE LIVES MATTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, tonight, my colleagues and I come to the floor of the United States House of Representatives to spotlight and highlight a very special week, a week that brings families and police officers together here in Washington, D.C. It is a week that is called National Police Week where these families and police officers from around the country come and gather to remember those police officers whose lives were tragically taken in the line of duty during the past year, and this happens every year. In that process, we not only remember those lives who were lost in the past year, but we also remember those lives who were lost in all of the years prior to that. Later on, I will talk about a couple of close friends of mine whose lives were taken early in their careers in the King County Sheriff's Office.

I should say that, prior to coming to Congress, I spent 33 years in the King County Sheriff's Office in Seattle, starting in a patrol car, then as a detective, then as a SWAT commander, a hostage negotiator, a precinct commander, and, finally, as a sheriff, then coming here to Congress.

To begin tonight, I honor Chehalis Police Officer Rick Silva and Washington State Trooper Brent Hanger, who both tragically died in the State of Washington in the line of duty.

I begin with Washington State Trooper Brent Hanger.

Trooper Hanger died on August 6, 2015, while investigating a marijuana grow in a small town called Yakima, Washington. He was 47 years old. He had a wife, Lisa, and six children: Emily, Erin, Kailey, Erik, Kyle, and Kevin. Trooper Hanger served with the State Patrol for 17 years, all of which were spent in the State Patrol's District 7, which includes Washington State's Snohomish, Skagit, and Whatcom Counties. Early in his career, in 2000, Trooper Hanger received the Award of Merit from the State Patrol for assisting and saving the life of a suicidal person.

It is one of the things we forget about with regard to police officers. We are really peace officers, and we are there to protect people and keep the peace. The vast majority of us who go into law enforcement enter into law enforcement to protect people and to save lives, and that is what Trooper Hanger did in 2000 on just one occasion that he was recognized for.

I also recognize Chehalis Police Officer Rick Silva.

Rick was 60. He died in Chehalis on June 18, 2015, in Centralia, Washington. He had a wife named Cindy and a daughter named Shannon. From 1986 to 1988, he was a Lewis County corrections officer. From 1988 to 2002, he was an officer with the Lewis County Sheriff's Office; and he was employed, when he passed away, with the Chehalis Police Department. He was a self-taught master fabricator, race car driver, automotive restorer, and carpenter.

Since the first known line of duty death in the year 1791, more than 20,000

U.S. law enforcement officers have made the ultimate sacrifice. A total of 1,439 law enforcement officers died in the line of duty during the past 10 years—an average of one death every 61 hours, or 144 per year. There were 123 law enforcement officers who were killed in the line of duty in 2015. Since the beginning of 2016, 36 law enforcement officers have died in the line of duty—36 this year. So far, the number of firearm-related fatalities is up 50 percent compared to the same time last year. In 2014 alone, there were 15,725 assaults against law enforcement, resulting in 13,824 injuries. Now, we hear sometimes in our own communities about those who lost their lives, but we don't always hear about those who were injured in the line of duty.

The next speaker I will introduce here in a moment is also a career law enforcement officer. He was also a sheriff, a sheriff in Florida, and I am sure that he and I together could trade police stories all night that would illustrate for you, Mr. Speaker, and for others who are listening the danger that one experiences as a law enforcement officer across this country.

I yield to the sheriff, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. NUGENT).

Mr. NUGENT. I thank Sheriff REICHERT so very much for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, we are here at a very solemn time in the law enforcement community. National Police Week is the week that we honor those who have fallen the year before and in all of the prior years.

When Sheriff REICHERT was talking about the statistics of assaults on law enforcement officers and about the number of law enforcement officers who are killed annually, behind each of those stories is a real person—a son or a daughter who is not coming home anymore, or a wife or a husband.

I have been a police officer. I was a police officer for 38 years, and I was ultimately a sheriff in Hernando County, Florida. I have buried my share of fellow law enforcement officers in those 38 years—too many to even talk about without bringing a tear. I can tell you, as a rookie police officer who was right out of the academy, in the first year I was on the street, one of the guys with whom I went through the academy was shot and killed. That was the first year out of the academy. I was held hostage at one point in time in my career by a guy who was intent on killing his wife.

We all have stories like that. Sheriff REICHERT is one of those true heroes in law enforcement. He is too modest to talk about the times that he has been assaulted, stabbed, or of the folks he has put in jail—the Green River Murderer. That is just the type of people we are. We are very humble. I was blessed to be in law enforcement for 38 years, and 12 of those years were outside the city of Chicago. I will tell you this: the brotherhood in law enforcement is the same wherever you go across this great Nation.

We are made up of people, though, and we have flaws like anybody else.

Whether you are a physician or a teacher or even a priest, sometimes they do wrong things, but 99.99 percent of those in law enforcement do it for all of the right reasons. It is not because they are going to make great pay, and it is not because: Oh, my gosh, I get to work the weekends or work holidays or work midnights or miss birthday parties. They do it because of the love that they have for the people whom they serve in whatever community it may be—as large as New York City and as small as Apopka, Florida. It doesn't matter. The feelings that go into being a law enforcement officer are those of service to his fellow man.

I have been blessed. My wife and I have been married for 41 years, with three sons—all of them in the military—but the one middle son, who is a Blackhawk pilot for the Florida Army National Guard, is also a deputy sheriff in Hillsborough County, Florida. I know the feeling that his wife has every time he dons that uniform and goes to work: Is he going to come home tonight?

That is the feeling that all of our wives and mothers and grandmothers felt for their children as they went out the door wearing that uniform of whatever city, county, township they supported or State police agency.

We have been blessed in America, and it is because of those people—that thin blue line—who are willing to stand in front of danger to protect the normal, average citizen, somebody they have never met and may never meet again. They run into burning buildings, just like on 9/11, to save people. They face down felons to save their fellow man. All they ask for is a little respect, and I don't think that is too much to ask.

This week we passed a piece of legislation, the Fallen Heroes Flag Act, that allows us as Members of Congress and in the Senate to provide a flag. It is a small token of our everlasting appreciation for the sacrifices their families have made in the deaths of loved ones who served their country while wearing a law enforcement officer's uniform. We passed that here, and the President is going to sign it. It gives us the ability to provide that flag at no cost to the families. Go figure. At the end of the day, it is really about recognizing in a very small and symbolic way that it does matter. Blue lives matter, and all lives should matter.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished sheriff, the gentleman from Washington State, DAVE REICHERT.

□ 1745

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, Sheriff NUGENT served 35 years. I know he looks a lot younger than I do, but he served a couple of years longer than I did.

Sometimes we call people heroes and we don't readily accept those titles because, as the sheriff said, we just want to help. Cops just want to help. They want to help people. They want to serve the community and want to keep people safe.

I am proud to have another Member here tonight who I am going to introduce who has been a staunch supporter of law enforcement since his time in Congress. We actually came here together in 2005, and he happens to be a judge from Texas.

So I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE).

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Sheriff REICHERT, Sheriff NUGENT, and all the Members in Congress who have served in law enforcement before they came to the House.

This is a solemn week when we show our respect and honor to those who have worn the shield or the star. You notice, Mr. Speaker, the shield or the star is always over the heart, and it is symbolic of protecting us from outlaws, from criminals.

Law enforcement stands between us and those who would do us harm. That is why they wear the shield or the star over their heart, because they will give their lives and have for the rest of us, protecting us from those do-bads out there.

I served as a prosecutor in Houston, Texas, for 8 years and then 22 years in the criminal courts trying all kinds of cases. I met a lot of police officers. I still know a lot of them. They are certainly a rare breed that would do what they do.

Most Americans couldn't go on patrol one day and do what they do. They are to be admired. We honor those who have died last year, but we honor those who have died in previous years.

Some in America don't realize that the Capitol Police protect us around the Capitol. In 1998, two Capitol police officers, John Gibson and Jacob Chestnut, gave their lives protecting Members of Congress. We should remember them.

Last year, 128 peace officers were killed in the United States. Eleven of those were females. Twelve were killed in Texas, the highest of any State. There were also two K-9s who were officers that were killed in Texas.

Three of those officers who were killed were from my hometown of Houston, Texas: Darren Goforth of the Sheriff's Department, Officer Tronoski Jones of the Sheriff's Department, and Officer Richard Martin of the Houston Police Department.

About this time last year, there was a robbery in progress—we call those hi-jackings in Houston—at a service station on Sunday morning. The Houston Police Department responded.

They get to the scene and see a stolen U-Haul van speeding away from the service station. There is a high-speed chase. The U-Haul got a distance on the Houston police officers, jumped out of the U-Haul, grabbed a lady that was getting in her minivan, pushed her out of the way, stole the minivan, took off, and are firing shots at the police officers. Meanwhile, most of Houston is asleep and safe.

Their chase goes on for a long time. Officer Richard Martin was ahead of

the chase. He got his patrol car far enough ahead that he jumped out of the car and put spikes in the road to stop this outlaw from getting away.

The outlaw sees Richard Martin, veers off the road, hits him and kills him and keeps driving for 20 miles before the Houston Police Department stopped him.

Richard Martin was 47. He had only been a peace officer for 4 years. He had other careers before that, including serving in the United States Air Force. He has two children. I met Tyler last week. He is 11. It was a rough, rough conversation talking to him about his dad.

As Sheriff NUGENT said, these are real people and they are good people. They are a rare breed, the American breed, who will wear that star, that badge, over their hearts to protect us.

All that separates us from evil and criminals is the thin blue line. That is it. You either have anarchy or you have the rule of law. Those who want to cause anarchy and mischief and crime in our communities are stopped by the law. That is why we call them law officers, peace officers.

They are protecting us from those that would do us harm, and we certainly should give them and their families the respect and honor that they rightfully deserve because they make a sacrifice every day. They willingly make that sacrifice for us.

Most peace officers I ever met have an extra job. They don't make enough money being a peace officer; so, to support their families, they do something else. They work long hours all week doing everything they can to make an income to take care of their families, and we should recognize that they are the best that America has.

In closing, I would just like to say, Mr. Speaker, peace officers are really the last strand of wire in the fence that protects good from evil, that protects the chickens from the coyotes. That is the peace officers. We appreciate what they have done.

I want to thank Sheriff REICHERT for his service to our country, especially all those cases that you solved years ago. I am sure that the criminals are glad that you are in Congress and not back in Washington State chasing them down.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank Judge POE for his service, too, and for his staunch support of law enforcement officers across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, who has a real understanding of what it means to serve. His family is a family of military service. So he understands the service that law enforcement officers provide across this country as well.

I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON).

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank Sheriff DAVE REICHERT along with Sheriff RICHARD NUGENT and Judge TED POE for their service to law enforcement in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, this Sunday marks the beginning of National Police Week, a time each year when we especially honor the service and sacrifice of our Nation's police officers. Tragically, the citizens of South Carolina's Second Congressional District lost two distinguished and courageous officers this year.

Officer Gregory Alia, a 7-year veteran of the City of Forest Acres Police Department, was beloved by his friends, family, and the entire community where he was born and raised. Gregory was an Eagle Scout, a graduate of Richland Northeast High School, and a graduate of the University of South Carolina.

In 2003, I was grateful to accompany him along with my son, Hunter, with Troop 100 of St. Joseph's Catholic Church of Columbia to the Philmont Scout Ranch in Cimarron, New Mexico, for a 100-mile trek. I knew he was a great fellow.

A hardworking, dedicated, and humble man, he was the embodiment of a hero every day of his life. As a new father, he loved his family, looked for the good in everyone, and was a selfless leader, one who brought people together.

His end of watch was September 30, 2015, when he was shot while pursuing a suspect.

I am grateful his wife, Kassy; parents, Dr. Richard and Alexis; aunt, Catherine Alia-Harding; and his infant son, Sal, are here in the gallery and community today.

Gregory's legacy lives on not only in the outpouring of love and appreciation from the community, but also in the actions of his family and friends.

I would like to especially recognize his wife, Kassy, for her selfless service in the days, weeks, and months following the loss of Gregory.

Less than a week—actually, even during the funeral service—after her husband was killed, the community was devastated by a 1,000-year rain, which caused widespread flooding.

Days after Gregory's funeral, Kassy volunteered at the Harvest Hope Food Bank. She also started Heroes in Blue, an organization dedicated to sharing and caring and providing courageous stories of police officers in South Carolina and across the country. She founded Gregory Alia Day on December 14, the date of what would have been their fourth anniversary.

Hundreds of community members and local businesses honored his memory by providing hot meals to 13 police stations in the Midlands of South Carolina.

Nearly a month after Gregory Alia was provided final honors at St. Joseph's Church, our community faced another tragedy when Officer Stacy Case lost her life in the line of duty.

Stacy, an Iraq war veteran, served the Army for 15 years, earning several commendations, including the National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary

Award, the Army Commendation Medal, and the Army Achievement Medal.

Originally from Michigan, Stacy joined the City of Columbia Police Department in 2011. She worked one of the most difficult beats of the department and regularly sought opportunities for professional development. Stacy was killed in an automobile accident when responding to a shots-fired call on November 7, 2015.

A highly respected member of the Columbia Police Department, her legacy will continue to live on. Indeed, last month the City of Columbia Police Department commissioned a new K-9 officer named Case in Stacy's memory. It is just one of the many tributes to her honor.

As we mark National Police Week, I remember those that we have lost and stand in support of the men and women who risk their lives every day to protect us.

God bless and protect our law enforcement and their devoted families.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. WILSON for his support and for being here tonight to help us highlight law enforcement Police Week and remember those who have died in the line of duty and those continuing to serve.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to introduce Mr. GOWDY from South Carolina, who also has a career in law enforcement and has continued that effort here to do the right thing and protect the American people here in Congress.

I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. GOWDY).

Mr. GOWDY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Sheriff Reichert for his service to the country and to the great State of Washington. I want to thank Judge POE, Sheriff Nugent, and my friend and colleague from South Carolina, JOE WILSON, who is the father of a prosecutor.

Mr. Speaker, Allen Jacobs was going to be a father again, but this time was going to be a little bit different. He was already the father of two precious little boys, but he was going to be the father of a little girl. His wife, Meghan, and he were expecting a child this July.

Life had prepared Officer Jacobs very well to be a father. He was an outstanding student, an athlete in Greenville, South Carolina. He put that athleticism and intelligence to work for our country in the United States Army.

He was deployed to Iraq, Mr. Speaker, for 15 months and even volunteered to live in the neighborhoods of Baghdad because he understood that all people want to live in a peaceful, secure environment.

After Iraq, he was deployed to Haiti because he wanted to help the Haitian people in the aftermath of their tragic earthquake.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the tug of fatherhood is strong. So Allen decided to return to the Upstate of South Carolina,

but his desire to protect and serve others and to provide peace and security to others never dissipated.

So he left the uniform of the United States Army and put on the uniform of the Greenville City Police Department. He pursued that calling with the same vigor and the same strength and the same professionalism that epitomized every other facet of his life, whether it was service on the SWAT team or the Cops on the Court, as a patrol officer for schools or a gang resistance team.

Mr. Speaker, Allen Jacobs would stop his patrol car from time to time to shoot basketball with young men in the inner city of Greenville who did not have the father figure that he was to his boys and that he would be to his daughter.

□ 1800

Now, Mr. Speaker, I learned all of this from Allen's mother in a telephone call we had 2 days before his funeral. This strong man who survived Iraq and Haiti and boot camp and police officer training couldn't survive an encounter with a teenage gang member who had just been released from jail. He never even had a chance to unholster his weapon, Mr. Speaker. He was just trying to protect, serve, enforce the law, and he was ambushed.

His funeral gave all of us an opportunity to reflect not only on his life, but on the lives of all the other folks in the upstate of South Carolina who died in the line of duty, whether it be Russ Sorrow or Kevin Carper or Eric Nicholson or Marcus Whitfield or Greg Alia, who was killed in the line of duty, as my friend from Columbia made note of. His wife is here and his parents are here and his aunt is here. They have a little boy who is less than 1 year old.

I want to say this in conclusion, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank all the women and men in uniform who are willing to do what most of us are not willing to do, and interact with people that most of us are not willing to interact with, and miss things in life that most of us are not willing to miss. But I especially want to send a message, Mr. Speaker, to Allen Jacobs' two sons and his daughter on the way and Greg Alia's son. Their fathers lived a life of service and sacrifice and significance, and they left the greatest legacy that you can ever leave children, which is a good name to be proud of.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. GOWDY.

I was going to try to get some courage up to tell one of my stories about my partner who was killed in 1982, but I think I am going to wait and gain my composure.

I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. JOLLY), who has led one of these Special Orders in the past in honor of police officers and is another staunch supporter of law enforcement across this great Nation.

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the sheriff. I want to associate myself—I know we all do—with our colleague Mr.

GOWDY's remarks. This is personal for so many.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the people of Pinellas County, Florida, the people in the State of Florida, who, if they were here in this Chamber tonight, would also want to associate themselves with the gratitude that fills this well, gratitude to law enforcement officers who each day do risk their lives. They risk their own security, they risk the stability of their family, and at times they risk the security of their children, knowing the risk that is on the line every day.

Mr. Speaker, the risk is very real. It is very audible. We know—it has been talked about tonight—that, on average, we lose a law enforcement officer once every 3 days in the line of duty. As Sheriff Reichert very rightfully pointed out, we also know the prevalence of assaults and injuries. By some accounts, more than one assault every single hour of every single day, 365 days of every single year. The risk is real.

We all have an opportunity, a privilege, to hold the public trust. When we sit in this Chamber, we represent fine men and women who wear the uniform. We represent multiple police departments, sheriff's departments, other law enforcement agencies. One of the great departments I have gotten the opportunity to work with since being a Member is the Clearwater Police Department—men and women of impeccable character, impeccable bravery, but also impeccable sacrifice, a department that dons the number 4 on their shirts to remember four law enforcement officers from their department who paid the ultimate sacrifice: Patrolmen Harry Conyers, Ronald Mahony, John Passer, and Peter Price.

So what can this body do in addition to paying tribute, on behalf of the people we represent, to those who serve in blue, our men and women in law enforcement? We can do what we are doing tonight, but we need to do it every single year. What we need in this town are Members of Congress and elected officials who stand with law enforcement.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I am sick and tired of people in this town who refuse to stand with law enforcement, who take cheap shots questioning the integrity of men and women who put their valor on the line, on display every single day. You want to make America safer? You want to solve civil unrest throughout the country? Let's stand with law enforcement. Let's say: Just as you have our back, we have yours.

The way to solve so many of these issues that we have seen on display on television in the last 2 years is to dispense with the rhetoric, dispense with the vitriol, dispense with the lies and the rumors and say: You know what? As a body, this Congress, this government is going to stand with our law enforcement officers each and every day.

There are two simple measures that I have introduced, and I am joined by

colleagues, each who have other measures as well. There are a lot of good measures out there.

One we will be highlighting tomorrow in a national press conference is called the Thin Blue Line Act. It provides for enhanced penalties for anyone who assaults or takes the life of a police officer. We currently provide those additional protections for someone who attacks a child, an elderly person, a disabled person. I think we should take that model code and apply it to law enforcement officers as well and very simply say to somebody: If you take the life of a law enforcement officer, be prepared to lose your own.

Another piece of legislation I think we should move on is something that addresses some of the questions about the 1033 program to provide surplus equipment. This President has launched a war on local law enforcement by restricting the availability of equipment and technology for local law enforcement agencies. Why don't we trust the leadership and the judgment of our local law enforcement leaders, our chiefs, and our sheriffs to determine what equipment is necessary for their force?

I have legislation that would leave 1033 perfectly in place but simply require the local law enforcement agency to certify that they have personnel trained and capable of operating that equipment. It is the right way to stand with law enforcement and say we are going to make sure you have the tools and technology you need.

The risk is very real; the politics, at times, are absolutely disgusting. We may never be able to replace the loss of families whose fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters were lost in the line of duty; we may never be able to heal the wounds; but we can honor our law enforcement officers every day. It is what this body is attempting to do tonight. It is the commitment of my colleagues I stand here with to let law enforcement officers around the country know that, just as you have got our back, we have got yours.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. JOLLY for his comments and his strong support of law enforcement over the years. I especially appreciate his comments regarding the partnership between police and community.

The police cannot protect our families and our neighborhoods and our communities alone. The communities can't do it alone. There has to be a partnership there, Mr. Speaker, and that partnership has to be based on trust.

So together, as a nation, in our communities across this great country, we have got to come together, police and communities, for the good of our children and the protection of our neighborhoods and the safety of our country. I think we can accomplish that with dialogue and especially going back to the good old days of community policing and actually visiting and talking with members of the community, as

Mr. GOWDY pointed out, a police officer who stopped in his neighborhood, got out of his car and played basketball with the young men and women on the street. I can remember those days myself. I got hurt in a basketball game with some kids on the street, but that is another story.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR).

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. REICHERT—Congressman, colleague, and sheriff—for this opportunity to support National Police Week and, more importantly, to thank him for his long career in law enforcement and his service.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to meet with the families of fallen Kentucky State Troopers Eric Chrisman and Blake Tribby. Tomorrow I will meet with the families of fallen Nicholasville, Kentucky, Police Officer Burke Rhoads and fallen Richmond Police Officer Daniel Ellis.

Each of these men died while doing his job, to defend our communities and to keep our families safe. These families have been deprived of a loved one, endured tremendous pain, and made enormous sacrifices so that all of us can live with greater peace of mind.

At a time when some are using the bad actions of a few to attack the dignity of the entire law enforcement profession, let the sacrifices of these men and their families remind us that uniformed officers are putting their lives on the line for our benefit every single day. We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to all law enforcement officers throughout this country, and especially to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

My wife, Carol, and I had the privilege and the honor of attending the memorial service for fallen Richmond, Kentucky, Police Officer Daniel Ellis just a few months ago. The memorial service in the Eastern Kentucky University Alumni Coliseum was packed full of family and friends and colleagues on the Richmond police force. But even more impressive, brothers in blue from all over Kentucky and all over the country were packed in that coliseum to pay tribute to this hero to our community.

Richmond Police Chief Larry Brock, who was eulogizing his colleague, addressed the crowd, and speaking of Ellis' valor and his kindness, he also expressed the heartbreak felt by all of Ellis' colleagues in blue. This is what he said:

“As we left the hospital to escort Daniel to Frankfort for the required medical exam, the skies opened up and it poured rain. It was as if the angels themselves were crying at the loss of this special young man,” said Brock, his voice breaking.”

I would like to join all of my colleagues in welcoming the tens of thousands of people who have come across the country to our Nation's Capital in support of National Police Week. I especially want to thank Katie, the

widow of Officer Ellis, and Officer Ellis' 3-year-old son, Luke. In the words of the Gospel, John 15:13: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

Mr. Speaker, I again thank Congressman REICHERT for hosting this important Special Order to recognize the contributions and the sacrifices of police officers from across the country.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. BARR for his comments and his support.

I yield to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BUCK).

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I thank Sheriff Reichert and others who have so eloquently spoken and recognize the importance of this week.

Police Week gives us the opportunity to honor and thank those law enforcement officers who put their lives on the line to protect us. The men and women who work in law enforcement know the definition of sacrifice. They know the look on their spouse's face when they leave for the swing shift. They know the loneliness of a patrol car on a snowy night. They know how many times they have looked at that picture of their family on the dashboard, and they know what it is like to lose one of their own.

In Colorado, we have already lost three officers this year: Deputy Sheriff Travis Russell, Corporal Nate Carrigan, and Deputy Sheriff Derek Geer. But speaking their names on the House floor won't bring them back for dinner tonight or put them in their patrol car or seat them in the bleachers of their son's baseball game on Saturday.

We must honor those who have fallen, but our honor must engender resolve; otherwise, we are forgetting too quickly the sacrifices we meant to remember. This is why I have introduced the Blue Lives Matter Act. The despicable criminals who would assault or kill an officer simply because of that officer's status as a member of law enforcement deserve an enhanced sentence and a prosecution and investigation from every possible agency that we can bring resources from. This legislation ensures that these criminals see justice.

Everywhere I go in Colorado, I run into officers who thank me for introducing this bill, and I appreciate that, but I don't deserve their thanks. Protecting police officers isn't something we do because we have some extra time or because we feel especially patriotic. Congress has a duty to protect those who protect us.

□ 1815

Mr. REICHERT. I thank the gentleman for his support and taking time to honor those fallen in the State of Colorado.

Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ALLEN). The gentleman has 19 minutes remaining.

Mr. REICHERT. I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN).

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlemen and sheriff, and I would also like to thank President John F. Kennedy for his proclamation recognizing our peace officers.

I want to say that I am grateful that the gentleman has chosen to come to the floor and have this Special Order honoring those who are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice.

I have heard persons talk about the virtues of peace officers. I don't have to have it explained to me because I have a personal experience that I can relate to.

My uncle was a deputy sheriff. My uncle was a peace officer. He was well respected in his community. I adored him. My uncle and I were together in his patrol car, and I was asking a lot of questions.

His comment to another person with us was: This boy is asking a lot of questions. He is going to be a lawyer because he is asking so many questions.

I did not know what a lawyer was, but I knew that, if my uncle, who was a deputy sheriff, said I was going to be a lawyer, then a lawyer I would be.

From that day forward, I had one mission in life when it came to my education and my career. That was to be a lawyer because my uncle, the deputy sheriff, the peace officer, proclaimed it as such.

So I am honored tonight to pay tribute to him. His name was Dallas Yates. He served in Florida in a small town called Gifford, near Vero Beach.

He lived into his nineties, became a minister, and passed away just recently. It was not in the line of duty, but it meant something to me to know that he lived and made a difference in the lives of others.

With reference to the phrase itself, this terminology, “in the line of duty,” it takes on new meaning if you go to the home-going ceremony of a peace officer. It will take on a new meaning.

When you see that riderless horse with the boots in the stirrups, it takes on a new meaning. When you see the family grieving, it takes on a new meaning. When you understand this is a person who was willing to sacrifice so that others might have life, it takes on a new meaning.

So I am honored to be here tonight, and I want people to know that there are many of us who believe that we have to support our law enforcement officers and stand with them and recognize that “in the line of duty” means more than going to work. It sometimes means not coming home.

Mr. REICHERT. I thank Mr. GREEN for his support. I think your uncle gave you great advice.

Mr. Speaker, as I stood here tonight and listened to all the other presenters, I came to the realization that there were a lot of people here that might be a lot more articulate about what it means to be a police officer. Even though I have served for 33 years, I found that a lot of words here touched me tonight because it brings back memories of good friends.

I want to tell a brief story related to some topics that were discussed earlier tonight about the opioid epidemic here. Yes, we are concerned about the people who are addicted. We are concerned—and rightly so—about the families who are trying to deal with that addiction and the danger that it presents to the person addicted, the danger it presents to the family, the tragedy it presents to that family and the addicted individual and the community in the entirety.

But sometimes we forget to include the police officer in that group of people that is endangered by this epidemic that has ripped our Nation. They are the first people there. They are the first ones called to a scene where someone might be acting up as a result of being addicted to heroin or some other drug.

I can remember a night. I just want to share this short story so that, Mr. Speaker, you can understand this is something that happens to police officers across this country every day of the year.

I was with a team of officers who were assigned to serve a drug search warrant on an apartment. We were all assigned a room to go to. I kicked in the door and I went to the right to a small bathroom.

When I entered that door and went into the bathroom, there was a young man in the bathroom with a rubber band around his arm and a needle injected in his arm. His eyes were glazed over. He was standing by the toilet.

He saw me come in with my badge over my heart and my gun in my hand. I said: Raise your hands above your head and drop to your knees. He raised his hands, but he didn't go to his knees. He stood there and stared at me for a short time. Eventually, his right hand moved to the right behind a half wall and came out with a gun.

At that moment, I had to make a decision. Every police officer across this Nation has to make a split-second decision: Do I shoot? Is my life in danger? Am I going home to my family? Am I not going home to my family? Is this the time? Those things go through your mind in a millisecond. In the snap of a finger, you have to make a decision.

Something told me I could talk to this young man. And so I continued to talk, and he finally leaned back and dropped the gun in the toilet, fell to his knees, and we handcuffed him and took him to jail.

I share that story to just emphasize the fact that police officers are going through these dangerous situations every day, having to make those decisions. And then, Mr. Speaker, every day after that they second-guess themselves, if they had decided to pull the trigger, and then the community will continue to second-guess.

And, yes, we need to be questioned. And, yes, we need to be held accountable. And, yes, we need to be trained. All of those things are true. But it is so easy to Monday-morning-quarterback.

I had a partner that was killed in 1982. We were tracking down a murder suspect. In the process of that, my partner was ambushed and shot in the chest and killed. He had five sons. They are all grown men now. They grew up without their father.

In 1984, another friend and partner was stabbed and killed with a World War II sword. His name was Michael Rayburn. My partner's name was Sam Hicks. But just a few years before that, Mike Rayburn saved my life.

I was directing traffic in the middle of the night, at 2 o'clock in the morning, on Pacific Highway just south of Seattle. It was a pretty major accident. I had my back turned to the ditch behind me. Deputy Rayburn drove up.

Just at the moment he drove up, somebody jumped out of the ditch. He had a knife in his hand and was running across the lanes of traffic to bury that knife in my back. Mike Rayburn was there just in the nick of time and tackled that man who was about to stab me. Two years later, Mike Rayburn was dead. His kids grew up without their father.

I am here tonight to honor them. I am here tonight to honor every police officer in this country. I am here tonight, Mr. Speaker, to ask people across the Nation to say thank you to the police officers that protect their community, protect their children, and protect their homes each and every day.

I will be there on Sunday at the memorial in front of the Capitol and be with those families. I have held the widows in my arms, as the sheriff. I have held the children and cried. I will be doing that again on Sunday.

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

TAX DAY FLOOD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am honored tonight to stand here in the U.S. House of Representatives to call to the attention of my colleagues, my friends, H.R. 5025, a bill that will bring some relief to much suffering in the Houston area in the State of Texas.

But before I get into the bill itself, I think it appropriate to thank some people for what they have done to help us get to this point.

I thank my colleague who will be speaking in just a moment, the Honorable GENE GREEN, who serves in the 29th District, which is adjacent to the district that I serve. I want to thank my friend GENE GREEN because he is the original cosponsor of this legislation. He was there to help shape it, and it means something to know that you have a friend that you can work with to this extent.

I want to thank my friend Congressman JOHN CULBERSON. He is the first to

make this legislation bipartisan. This is not a partisan issue. Flooding is not a partisan issue. The homes that are damaged, the lives that are lost, none of this is partisan. I am grateful to Congressman CULBERSON for signing onto this bill.

I would like to thank the 60-plus cosponsors of this legislation who have said that they want to see what has been authorized materialized, such that, in Houston, Texas, we cannot only eliminate a lot of flooding—and we will. We can't eliminate all of it, but we can mitigate that which we cannot eliminate.

I thank Chairman MCCAUL of the Homeland Security Committee. He published the letter for us, the members of the delegation, to sign and send to the President of the United States, asking that Texas have certain areas within the State declared disaster areas because of the horrific flooding that took place on what we call Tax Day.

I thank the leadership for allowing us to have this team on the floor tonight on both sides. The leadership makes these things possible, and I am grateful to all leadership for doing this.

Finally, I want to thank President Barack Obama because he did, Mr. Speaker, declare certain areas in Texas disaster areas so that we might receive the help of FEMA and funds to help people recover and to restore their lives and continue with their lives.

So tonight I will say more about some of these things mentioned, but now I am asking to ask the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN), my colleague, who is the lead cosponsor of this, to have his commentary.

Because his district has suffered greatly not just this time, but in the past, from these floods. I will not go into it. I will leave all to be said about it to him.

But I think it appropriate that I acknowledge his great work in the Congress of the United States of America not only on this issue, but on many other issues impacting people within his district and across the length and breadth of this great country.

□ 1830

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and neighbor and friend for setting this Special Order tonight for what we call the tax day floods in Houston and Harris County, Texas.

Our district was hit by flooding, but not near as much as in Congressman AL GREEN's, because I was in his district that week, and also in the neighboring districts, Congressman CULBERSON, Congresswoman LEE and Congressman MCCAUL, and Congressman BRADY.

But I was just looking at a memo. In our district, we have Hunting Bayou, which is part of the legislation, that was overflowed; and the people who live in that area, along Interstate 10 East, they cleaned out their homes, the Sheetrock and everything else, and it is literally a tragedy.