

wait? How many more people have to die to move us to act? How many more American towns and cities must be added to the constantly growing list of places like Orlando and Columbine and Aurora and Charleston and Newtown?

Moments of silence aren't enough. Thoughts and prayers are not enough. In fact, the Scriptures teach us that such pieties give grave offense when they mask a refusal to do what we know is right. We need action. I call on my colleagues to bring these common-sense proposals to the floor for a vote.

ONGOING PEACE PROCESS IN COLOMBIA

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

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud and encourage the ongoing peace process in Colombia.

Over the last 52 years, Colombia has witnessed an armed conflict between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC. The conflict has taken a serious toll on the country: 220,000 people have been killed and more than 6.8 million people have been forced from their homes. The fighting has been especially difficult for the rural areas of the country.

But a new day is on the horizon for the people of Colombia. The country is on the verge of a historic peace agreement with the FARC. In fact, the government and the FARC signed a ceasefire agreement on June 23. This was seen as one of the few remaining roadblocks to a final peace agreement.

With all that is going on in the world today, it would be easy to miss the important progress taking place in Colombia. The peace process isn't garnering the media attention that some other foreign affairs are, but it is going to have just as important an impact on global affairs.

Last year, I had the opportunity to travel to Colombia with the Committee on Armed Services and my colleague from Arizona, Mr. GALLEGRO, whose mother is from Colombia. It didn't take long for me to realize that Colombia is a beautiful and fascinating country, and I was very impressed with the hospitality of the Colombian people. It also became clear during my trip that the majority of Colombian people want things to be better in their country, and they are committed to the peace process.

Mr. Speaker, Colombia is our closest and strongest ally in Latin America, so the peace process is very important not only to Colombia, but also to the United States. Their future opportunities are also ours.

Colombia has a growing economy with immense potential based on their abundant natural resources and a culture that values hard work. A more stable Colombia will allow the country to further expand their economy, which would be a benefit to us right here at home.

At a time when there are so many foreign policy challenges around the globe, Colombia is a rare success story. The country was literally on the verge of becoming a failed state, but now they are a leader in the region. The United States maintains significant bilateral relations and has provided important diplomatic assistance to the Colombian Government, but we have done so without becoming overly involved in their local affairs.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize my strong support for the Colombian peace process, and I call on every Member of this House to also lend their support to that process. We need to encourage our neighbors in South America. I want to commend President Santos for his leadership and his commitment to a lasting peace.

I also want to highlight the important work of Ambassador Pinzón. I appreciate his friendship, and I applaud his work to strengthen the partnership between the United States and Colombia.

Ultimately, only the people of Colombia can reach the lasting peace agreement that restores justice and order to their country, but the United States can—and I believe we must—stand ready to assist the Colombian Government as they finalize this process and then as they move their country out of conflict and into a period of stability and lasting peace.

ANOTHER AMERICAN SHOT DOWN BY THE POLICE

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I had planned to talk about something else this morning, but the events of the last 12 hours changed my plans.

I watched this morning on TV and online—like a lot of Americans—another of our fellow Americans shot down by the police. This time it was in St. Paul, Minnesota. Earlier this week, it was in Baton Rouge. But we know it is everywhere—in Chicago, in Baltimore, in South Carolina.

It seems that every week or month another Black man is shot by the police, and we always have the same reaction: Oh, it is a tragedy; there should be an investigation. A lawsuit is filed, and another settlement. Oh, the Justice Department and the FBI need to oversee the investigation because we cannot trust the police to police themselves. And then we go back to business as usual, and nobody actually does anything.

State by State, city by city, and county by county, we might make this reform or that reform, but there is no national strategy to stop police from killing people, especially Black people, especially Black men.

I wept this morning as I watched the mother of Philando Castile describe her son. She said he had a job, he served children in the cafeteria, and

that he was a calm young man. She also said that he was not a thug.

Why does a Black woman in the 21st century in the United States of America, while a Black man sits in the Oval Office, almost 50 years after Martin Luther King, Jr., was gunned down, why does she have to start her description of her son with "He was not a thug"? She said: "We are being hunted."

Mr. Speaker, this is another sad chapter in American history.

I do not feel compelled to say in describing my grandson Luisito: Well, first and foremost, he is not a gang banger, he is not a thug. But for this Black mother and for a lot of African American mothers in this country, that is something they feel a necessity to say.

This mother did everything right. Her son was still shot dead by the police. This young man was riding in the passenger seat of a car with his fiancée and 4-year-old little daughter in the backseat.

He had a permit to carry a weapon, which he announced to the police. So he had gone through the background check, gone through the training, and had the concealed carry permit. But he was shot dead in front of his loved ones, his fiancée and daughter.

Why is it in 21st century America we have to have a conversation about how to avoid being shot by the police? Why do I have to instruct my grandson about deescalation if he comes in contact with the police, about strategies to prevent a sworn public servant, an officer of the court, a trained member of law enforcement, and I have to instruct my teenage grandson how to prevent that person from shooting him to death for no reason? Why, Mr. Speaker?

We have no national strategy, no national conversation. When Americans are literally crying out in the streets that, yes, Black lives matter, we have no response from the Congress, the people's House. None.

The head of the FBI announces he won't press charges against a candidate in the Democratic Party. Stop everything; we need to have hearings, congressional hearings. Benghazi, let's spend millions on hearings, political hearings. Planned Parenthood, let's form a special committee to do what the majority party feels is important from their political point of view.

But a young Black man is shot by police in his car in cold blood? Nothing. Young men are shot by police, videotapes are withheld from the public, and nothing happens.

Mr. Speaker, I think Black lives matter. I think the lives of young men in inner cities across this country matter. And I think this Congress should be the place where America comes together to decide what we are going to do about young Black men getting shot by the police. Not next week, when it is going to happen again. Not next month, when it is going to happen again. Not waiting safely until after the election,

when it happens again, again, and again.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress needs to come together and lead, and we need to start right now.

RESTORING ACCESS TO MEDICATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Restoring Access to Medication Act, introduced by my good friend and colleague, Congresswoman LYNN JENKINS.

Mr. Speaker, for far too long, Missouri families have suffered from the never-ending financial burdens and health consequences imposed by the Affordable Care Act. From limited access to physicians to skyrocketing premiums, ObamaCare has failed our country and our people.

For years, Missouri families have used health savings accounts and flexible spending accounts as an important tool to save and help pay their medical expenses, including over-the-counter drugs. In the United States, more than 20 million individuals and families have taken advantage of HSAs and FSAs. They have counted on them to help protect against unexpected healthcare expenses and better plan for medical costs throughout the year.

Under ObamaCare, the administration did its best to get rid of these HSAs and FSAs by limiting the amount of savings people could contribute to them and how that money could be used. They even mandate that funds in HSAs and FSAs cannot be used to purchase over-the-counter medications without a prescription from a physician. Simply put, this administration added yet another layer of “Washington knows best” red tape to how to spend your money and how to manage your health care.

As a mother of three, I remember sick children, cold and flu seasons, and late-night runs to the drugstore for cough syrup and fever reducers. I know that these unexpected expenses directly impact families that are fighting to make ends meet. Adding another doctor’s visit just so you can use your already saved money to purchase over-the-counter medications is unfair, it is wrong, and it is downright senseless.

The Restoring Access to Medication Act will repeal this portion of the law that unfairly targets pocketbooks and reduces access to everyday medications like aspirin and allergy relief. This legislation will put Americans back in the driver’s seat, restoring control of the family’s day-to-day health expenses and needs.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to this legislation increasing access to over-the-counter medications that families need, it allows Americans to, most importantly, increase the amount of money they contribute to their health savings accounts. While doubling the

amount both individuals and families can contribute to their accounts in 2017, this new law will also have a net decrease of \$2.2 billion for our Federal budget over the fiscal years 2016 through 2026.

Mr. Speaker, I am thrilled that the House has passed this bipartisan, commonsense legislation which places the healthcare needs of families above the liberal interests of bureaucrats in Washington. It will save families money and put them further in control of their healthcare decisions, something the ever-failing Affordable Care Act will never do.

HISTORY OF THE ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, during my 28 years representing Seattle in the Congress, there have, unfortunately, been several mass shootings in my district, including one in 2006 at the Jewish Community Center and another one in 2014 at Seattle Pacific University. I know the pain and the frustration that members of the delegation from central Florida are feeling 3 weeks after the shooting in Orlando.

As a psychiatrist, I know and understand the trauma that these types of violent events inflict on individuals and communities. As someone who was around Congress in 1994 when the first assault weapons ban was passed, and in 2004 when it expired without action, I thought it would be useful to talk for a few minutes today about the history of that ban and how Congress capitulated to the gun lobby and allowed weapons designed for killing to flood our communities.

Congress began consideration of an assault weapons ban after two mass shootings in California. In January, in 1989, a disturbed man with a long criminal history walked into the Cleveland Elementary School in Stockton, California, and fired 106 rounds in 3 minutes from his semiautomatic rifle, killing 5 children and wounding 32. Nothing happened. It is no surprise that we have the same thing happen in Connecticut and nothing happens.

Four years later, in 1993, a failed businessman opened fire in the Pettit & Martin law firm in San Francisco with a pair of semiautomatic pistols, shooting hollow point ammunition.

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The predictable public outcry and strong support for an assault weapons ban following these shootings led Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN to put forward legislation that would ban semiautomatic weapons. In an unprecedented show of bipartisan support, former Presidents Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and Gerald Ford joined together to publicly urge Congress to “listen to the American public and to

the law enforcement community and support a ban on the further manufacture of these weapons.”

A ban on assault weapons eventually passed the Congress in 1994 as a part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act. However, in order to get that legislation through the House, a costly consensus was made to gun rights supporters and the NRA that allowed the ban to sunset or expire after 10 years. So, despite the importance of the assault weapon ban, it was allowed to expire.

From 2003–2008, Senator FEINSTEIN led numerous efforts to reauthorize the ban, but not a single bill left her committee. We had the same here in the House. Carolyn McCarthy made the plea over and over again. Her husband and son died on a Long Island Railroad train from a guy who came into the train and shot up the aisle and killed them. One hundred four people were gunned down during this time period in mass shootings, and all Congress did was to send a message that weapons designed for use in the theater of war were acceptable for use on our streets.

While I certainly do not want to minimize the loss of lives, I find it important to point out that Congress felt compelled to act on an assault weapons ban in 1994, following two shootings that killed a combined total of 13 people. For some reason, this body can’t seem to summon the courage to act after 27 are killed in Connecticut, 24 in San Bernardino, 9 in Oregon, 12 in Colorado, and 49 in Orlando. And I could go on and on and on for my entire speech.

The question you have to ask is: Have we become so numb to the pain of mass shootings that, no matter how many innocent people are gunned down, we won’t find the will to act? Has the NRA desensitized my Republican colleagues so much that the slaughter of children in a kindergarten doesn’t even result in a single vote on the floor, a denial to bring the issue out here and debate it in public?

What is the price that the American people must pay before Republicans quit this obstruction? 100 killed? 200? Fifty doesn’t seem to hit threshold.

I understand reinstating the assault weapons ban will be tough, but, Mr. Speaker, we must have that debate if we are going to have a society in which we all feel safe.

BRING THE BILLS FOR A VOTE

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

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I don’t like being here. I had meetings I had to cancel. I had phone calls I had to put off. But I am committed to doing everything I can to get two votes on the floor—just two. They are simple issues: no fly, no buy, and closing the gaping loopholes in background checks for the purchase of a gun. That shouldn’t be a