

of the Congress of the United States of America to address some of the great issues of our time.

Mr. Speaker, the message that I deliver today has been 68 years in the making. The message that I deliver today had its genesis with my mother, who cautioned me that I must behave a certain way in the presence of the constabulary, the police; a mother who was concerned for her son, who always made it very clear to me that I had to say yes, sir and no, sir, and that I had to always accept whatever the police said to me.

This message is 68-plus years in the making, Mr. Speaker. The message is, in part, based upon what my uncle, who was a deputy sheriff, shared with me about my behavior in the presence of the police; that I must always, always yield to the police; submit to the police; never challenge the police. Sixty-eight years in the making, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my heart is heavy after what has happened over the last 2 days to Black men in the United States of America. My heart is heavy. I had the unfortunate circumstance of seeing what happened to that man in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on the ground with his hands flailing, blood flowing from his chest.

I heard the young lady this morning pleading to God: Jesus, God, don't let him be dead. Maybe not her exact words, but very much what she said: Don't let him be dead; don't let this happen.

Mr. Speaker, we have to do something about the killing of Black men at the hands of the constabulary in this country. If you don't want to investigate the police, if you don't want to investigate the system, the culture that causes it, investigate Black men. Find out why they want to run out in front of bullets.

Let's find out why they are the ones who are consistently, and with some degree of systemic order, forcing themselves upon the police such that they find themselves dead. Investigate us.

I am a Black man in the United States of America. I have lived what I am saying. Sixty-eight years in the making, that is how long this speech has been made. I don't need a written piece of paper. I know what is going on. I was a judge for 26 years. I saw it. I can give firsthand testimony about what is going on. It is time for us to investigate what is happening to Black men in this country.

Black lives do matter. These people are trying to tell us something, these young people. We must listen to them. Let us not ignore what is going on. The camera's eye doesn't lie. If you look at these videos and you use your common sense, you know that there is something going on, and we need to investigate it.

And it is pervasive, it is not just one-off circumstances that we are having to contend with. These things are happening across the length and breadth of

this country. Every venue has some account that can be called to our attention. It is time for us to do something.

Mr. Speaker, I call on you. Mr. Speaker, you are the Speaker of the whole House. Mr. Speaker, I call on you to assemble the House so that we can address the issue of Black men dying at the hands of police in this country. And we ought to investigate it to the extent that we come to conclusions about the people that are involved in these tragedies. We should not have to have another mother to have her child in the car, 4 years of age, when her boyfriend is killed.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time, and I thank God for giving me 68 years to develop this message. And I pray, Mr. Speaker, that you will do something about what is happening to Black men in this country.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CHANHASSEN HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS SOFTBALL TEAM

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Chanhassen High School girls softball team on their State championship.

After finishing their regular season with a record of 17-3, and in second place in the West Metro Conference standings, the third-seeded Storm went on to win four games straight to win the Section 2 championship. And then, as Section 2 representatives in the State tournament, the Storm won over Forest Lake, Hopkins, and Buffalo, outscoring their opponents 19-5 on their way to the championship.

Mr. Speaker, it is accomplishments such as these that are a testament to the skills and the values that all high school athletics teach, and these young ladies demonstrated determination and toughness on the field as well as drive and responsibility in the classroom.

Balancing schoolwork and athletics can be challenging, but these student athletes proved themselves to be both leaders on the diamond and in the classroom. The families, teachers, friends, and our entire community are very proud of these young ladies. I congratulate the Chanhassen High School softball team on their win.

LIFE AS A BLACK MAN IN AMERICA

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, my topic today was going to be on the issue of gun violence, mass shootings, the need for Congress to take some action to keep America safe, the fact that 90 percent of the people of this country want Congress to take some action. I was going to speak about that today.

But I would be remiss, as a Black man in America, to pass up the opportunity to comment about life as a Black man in America, in an urban setting, particularly when it comes to police community relations, you see, because we live in a gun culture, and nowadays, everybody has a gun.

Some folks have a culture of growing up shooting, hunting. Nothing wrong with that. Take the kids to the gun show, the family, on a Saturday afternoon. And at the gun show there is a bunch of unlicensed gun dealers there selling weapons of mass destruction to any and everybody. That is a part of the culture because everybody wants a gun.

Well, it is time for universal background checks. That is a simple piece of legislation, closing the gun show loophole, which that loophole is bigger than the Goodyear Blimp traveling sideways. That loophole is so big that you could fit the Goodyear Blimp through it sideways, and it is worth nothing because unlicensed gun dealers can sell guns to any and everybody. Any and everybody can purchase a gun over the Internet, no background check required. We need to close that gun show loophole by passing legislation that enforces the notion that there will be universal background checks.

I wanted to talk about that today, and I still think that is important. But even if we have universal background checks in this country, there is still a problem for Black folks who decide to arm themselves.

I mean, we had the case of Philando Castile in Falcon Heights, Minnesota, yesterday, pulled over for a busted taillight. Here is a working man in the car with his girlfriend and her 4-year-old daughter, and he is armed, as everyone else in America is. But he is a Black man riding in the streets of a city in America, and so he must not be allowed to have that gun or, at least, if he has one, everybody is in such fear that they develop a trigger finger. And when he reaches for his license, then he gets blasted four times and his life is snuffed out. That is what happens to Black folks in America.

Now we find out that the man had a valid license to carry that firearm. In many States now, due to what the NRA lobby has done, you don't even need a license to carry the firearm in your car. So the man was acting lawfully. He gets blasted. He is no longer with us.

The day before, Alton Sterling got a little hustle going on. He is selling CDs at the store, at the corner store. Why shouldn't he be allowed to have a weapon? He has got a weapon in his pocket. Everybody else has got a weapon in their pocket. But no, he is a Black guy, and so we automatically develop a trigger finger when the police approach. Take him down hard, two on one, throwing him all across the car. You saw the video.

If the man had wanted to shoot, he would have pulled the gun out much

quicker than when they threw him across the car and had him on the ground pinned to the ground. And he ends up getting shot in the back and in the chest.

This is life in America. This is our culture of gun violence that this Congress has allowed to manifest itself in this way.

We shouldn't have to live like this. Nobody should have to live like this. People walking around afraid of what their neighbor is going to do to them because they know that he has got a mental problem and he should not have a weapon, but he was able to get it over the Internet or through the gun show, unlicensed firearm dealers.

So weapons have proliferated into our society. We are now at war, not with a foreign enemy, but with ourselves, with our neighbor. It is not fair to any of us.

But I tell you, when America coughs, Black folks have always gotten pneumonia. Nowadays, when America coughs, Black folks die, and it really has to stop, ladies and gentlemen. This is not the way that we should live.

A CALL FOR MEANINGFUL ACTION ON GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call for meaningful action on gun violence. The key word in that sentence is "meaningful."

The tragedy in Orlando served as a dark wake-up call to all Americans. Across the Nation, in every major city, to every small town, Americans are speaking with one voice saying: "Enough is enough."

The American people are demanding a no fly, no buy bill that prevents those on the terror watch list from purchasing firearms.

How have Republicans responded?

They have put together a weak, unworkable, and convoluted bill that will not address the real problem.

Imagine, under this legislation, law enforcement must convince a court within 72 hours that the buyer "has committed or will commit an act of terrorism" before it could block a gun sale.

Is this your idea of homeland security? Really? Is this how you protect the homeland?

Mr. Speaker, the standard is simply unreachable and unworkable. Now, one has to wonder where Republicans got such an unfeasible idea.

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The answer is as simple as it is sad. The NRA, which represents large weapon manufacturers, wrote this legislation. We need a real, effective no fly, no buy bill that stops those on the terrorist watch list from purchasing firearms. The Republican legislation is simply a giveaway to the NRA that

will hobble law enforcement. We also need a system of effective, universal background checks that keeps guns out of the hands of those who would do us harm.

Once again, House Republicans are standing in the way. They are preventing consideration of this measure that is supported by 90 percent of the American people. Why? Just to keep their friends in the NRA lobby happy with them. Why? Follow the money.

Mr. Speaker, this is unconscionable. The week after the Orlando slaughter, I read on this floor the names of the victims. At that time, I said that while we will never forget them, their memory will inspire us to real change. But this is not real change. We do not honor the victims of Orlando by passing legislation written by the NRA and gun manufacturing lobbyists. In fact, if anything, this legislation is an insult to the intelligence of the American people. Well, I have news for you. The American people see through this, and they are not buying it.

I urge my colleagues: do what is right. Reject this unworkable NRA-backed trick so that we can vote on real, meaningful legislation to address gun violence in this country.

GUN VIOLENCE

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

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago, I joined with my colleagues here in the House of Representatives, and we took an extraordinary action. We sat in, we rallied, we challenged the Republican leadership, and we spoke out about gun violence in a way that we had never done before.

We said to the leadership: Enough is enough; we have got to do something about these mass murders; we have got to do something about these guns.

We challenged the leadership because we all know that the gun lobby has too much influence and too much control in this House. We also know that too many of our Members will not confront this issue on the opposite side of the aisle because, as it has been said, they are the handmaidens of the NRA. So we gathered, we spoke out, and we were talking about two simple bills that we wanted them to vote for.

We are trying to educate the American people that those who do not want to go against the gun lobby will have the American citizens believe that we are trying to take away their guns. We are not trying to take away anybody's guns. This is not about the Constitution or the Second Amendment. We simply said we want to bring to the floor two simple pieces of legislation.

One is no fly, no buy. What does that mean? It simply means if you are on the list of persons who are prevented from flying because you are suspected of being a possible person involved in

terrorism or something of that sort, you cannot get on an airplane. It is something about your background, what you have done, and the connections that you have that will not allow you to place our people on the airplane at risk.

So what we are saying is if you can't fly because you will place fliers at risk, you shouldn't be able to buy a gun. So that is what no fly, no buy is all about. If you are too dangerous to fly, then you shouldn't be able to go and purchase a gun. That is very simple.

The other is universal background checks, and that is very simple. We have some background check laws, but still there are people who sell guns out of the back of their car at these gun shows, and they have no background checks. They could be murderers, they could be people who are involved with serious domestic violence, they could be people who are dangerous, and they could be mentally ill. We are saying we have to have universal background checks.

What is controversial about those two bills? But they won't pay attention. They will not take up the bill. As a matter of fact, the leadership is threatening us. They want to charge us with violations of the House rules, take us to the Ethics Committee, and have us sanctioned in some way because they say we have violated the rules.

Well, I say to them: I won't be intimidated. I am not afraid of them or the Ethics Committee. If they want to take us to the Ethics Committee, come on, let's go, because we are going to stand up for what we believe in, and we are not going to be intimidated by being charged with violation of the rules of the House.

Now, while I am talking about not being intimidated by anybody, I want to congratulate and thank Mr. AL GREEN of Texas for what he says has been a 68-year journey where he got up in our caucus today, and he took this floor in a way that I have not seen any Member of Congress in the years that I have been here take the floor and just bare their hearts and just say what is on their mind. I have never seen a Member of this House come to tears and beg us to do something about the killing of Black men, in particular, that is going on.

While we are dealing with gun violence—and we are dealing with gun violence to protect everybody—I want to tell you, I have been here when we have had the mothers up here from Newtown. I went to Charleston, South Carolina, where the Emanuel Nine were killed, and I stayed up all night with people placing flowers in front of the church. I literally went to Mr. AGUILAR and sat with him when the San Bernardino massacre happened. We were here when Columbine happened, and we all thought at that time that we have got to do something. We have done nothing.

Then there is Orlando, Florida; there is Aurora; there is Arizona; there is