

reminded of a statement. I actually have come to be a great admirer of Garfield. It seems to me that everything I have read from him has been powerful. He seemed to have a keen awareness and understanding of the role of what I am talking about today: the role of religion and morality in American society and culture and our entire system of government.

Garfield made this statement, Mr. Speaker, and I believe it is more applicable today than it has been in any day in which we have lived. Here is what he said:

“Now more than ever before, the people are responsible for the character of their Congress. If that body be ignorant, reckless and corrupt, it is because the people tolerate ignorance, recklessness and corruption. If it be intelligent, brave and pure, it is because the people demand these qualities to represent them in the national legislature.”

Then, he said this, Mr. Speaker:

“If the next centennial does not find us a great nation . . . it will be because those who represent the enterprise, the culture, and the morality of the nation do not aid in controlling the political forces.”

What a powerful statement.

Mr. Speaker, being reminded of that statement, I would ask us today: How can we, the people be involved, be it in the enterprise, the culture, or the morality of the Nation? How can we, as Garfield said, be involved in controlling the political forces if we do not have the First Amendment protections to do so? How can we be engaged if we continue to chip away at the right of people to believe what they believe and to exercise those beliefs within the public square without fear of intimidation or punishment?

Mr. Speaker, I believe now more than ever is the time for us not to chip away at our First Amendment rights, but to defend them and protect them and ensure that those rights are maintained for all Americans now and for the next generation and for as long as this Nation exist.

Mr. Speaker, as the First Amendment Defense Act comes before this body in the weeks to come, I hope and pray that we will stand behind it.

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

#### TRAGEDY IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LOUDERMILK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, might I ask how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 32 minutes remaining.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate very much my friend, Mr. HICE, who preceded me.

It is a very sad day around the country. So much in the way of sympathy

and prayers for the victims' families in Dallas are greatly appreciated.

As someone who grew up looking forward to visits to the big city of Dallas, it is deeply troubling to see what has happened there. The Dallas police chief said that the suspect said he wanted to kill White people, especially White police officers.

I was listening in the cloakroom to a press conference going on now with some of our African American Members of Congress defending Black Lives Matter and discussing the unfairness in America for African Americans in this country.

I don't know the races of the officers that were shot. Apparently, the suspect said he wanted to shoot and kill White officers, but I know there are a lot of officers in Dallas of a lot of different races.

I had the opportunity, if you want to call it an opportunity, of trying a murder case for 10 weeks in Dallas. I worked with some incredible Dallas police officers. Because of my background, I continue to have great respect for law enforcement officers.

There was something that we had seen since the protest days of the sixties and seventies: calling police officers pigs and calling them all kinds of names. People—terrorists from those days that have now grown up and even teaching college—wanted to kill pigs, wanted to kill police officers back then. Back then it wasn't a race issue; it was just killing what they called pigs.

Having served 4 years in the Army after Vietnam, we weren't ever in combat in my 4 years, but we knew what it was to be spit at, to be ridiculed, and at times to be told not to wear your uniform off post because people hate you so much. So I have some empathy for what officers have gone through.

The evil and the hatred that brought about 9/11, killing thousands of precious lives, taking so many innocent lives here, had a result that I didn't expect: it brought America together. September 12, there on our town square in Tyler, Texas, people of all walks, age, race, gender—it didn't matter—came together. We sang together, we prayed together, and even all held hands together.

□ 1315

As I have said before, the thing I loved about that day was there was no—there were no hyphenated Americans on September 12 of 2001. We were Americans, without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, gender, age. None of that mattered. We were Americans. We had been attacked, and we were wanting to stand together.

In all our sympathy for those who died on 9/11, the day after, it felt good to be together. For about 3 months our churches were filled and people were asking God to bless America again, and it felt good to be together as Americans.

Nobody from organizations like Freedom from Religion dared show their

face that day because people across America were begging God for His protection, for His blessings, as He has through most of our Nation's history.

There is an article that has already come out today from the Federalist publication. It says:

“Five Takeaways From the Dallas Police Chief's Press Conference. Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings and Dallas Police Chief David Brown held a press conference Friday morning in the wake of the sniper shooting during a Black Lives Matter protest in downtown Dallas that killed at least five officers and injured seven more and two civilians.”

The five takeaways, they say, are, number 1: “Police Killed a Suspect With a Robot Carrying a Bomb.”

Number 2: “Gunman Said he Wanted to ‘Kill White People, White Officers.’”

Number 3: “Brown and Rawlings Were Unclear About Number of Suspect/s and their Descriptions.”

Number 4: “Brown said Police Don't Feel Support Most Days, but Need It Now.”

Number 5: “Brown and Rawlings Asked for Prayer.”

I appreciate my fellow Members of Congress feeling the need to have a press conference today and, again, to support the movement of Black Lives Matter and the injustices that have happened at the hands of police officers.

As I have said many times during my adult life, including especially during my days as a District Judge handling felony cases where humans are involved, there will be mistakes and wrongdoing. And no matter what profession, there will be people who do wrong.

But I have always taken solace in the fact—what I believe is the fact—that amongst law enforcement, those who would do wrong or who may be prejudiced in their motivation, the numbers are so much fewer percentage-wise than in the general population.

That is why over the last 7½ years it has grieved me greatly to see our President rebuff the opportunity to bring us together as a nation anytime an incident involved a police officer, his knee-jerk reactions repeatedly, whether it was saying that the police acted stupidly or jumping onto the bandwagon against police, when it turned out the police were in the right.

There have been instances where they were not, and there are some on video where it clearly appears they did terribly wrong and reacted terribly wrong. And when that happens, perpetrators, wrongdoers are to be punished without regard to race, creed, color, gender, national origin. That doesn't matter.

It seems, as long as we have groups like Black Lives Matter, who will just become unnerved and inflamed when a Democratic candidate for President says all lives matter and chastise him for saying all lives matter, to the point that he has to withdraw his belief that all lives matter and go back to saying,

you're right, you're right, it's just Black lives matter.

That is nowhere near approaching the dream that Martin Luther King, Jr., had just about 2½ miles down the Mall here in front of the Lincoln Memorial.

So we had people, after 9/11, return to loving and appreciating and an outpouring of support for first responders, law enforcement, because they saw that, when push came to shove, the huge majority of law officers put their own life at risk for the benefit of others without regard to race, creed, color, or national origin, gender, age. They don't care. Their job is to serve and protect, and they do an amazing job.

I just keep going back to the statement of the police chief, that police don't feel support most days, but they need it now. But when elected officials contribute to stoking the flame of hatred and animosity toward our law enforcement, then people that don't have the reasoning ability that most of our elected officials have get stoked. They get inflamed. And we don't need anybody coming out and blaming guns before that person even knows what kind of guns were used.

I know we have friends that keep saying, if you are on the no-fly list, which means if you are on the list that has a great deal of arbitrariness to it, to the point that this administration will not even tell Congress how they decide who goes on the no-fly list, and even though they won't tell us how to get off the no-fly list if you are arbitrarily and mistakenly put on it, as Ted Kennedy and so many others have been, that is a formula for disaster for totalitarianism.

We don't need an arbitrary list that is concocted in secret with the secret way of getting off that we are not aware of. That is not the way you go about trying to take away people's civil rights to keep and bear arms.

After seeing the disaster in Dallas, there are a number of things I knew. One is that the people in Texas—most of them, except for the agitators, so many that have come in from outside, but most of them—will respond and show their love and support for our law officers because we love law abiding in Texas.

I hope and pray, Mr. Speaker, that we can stop the divisiveness. There is nothing wrong with arguing. There is nothing wrong with debate. That is how we got our Constitution—a lot of yelling and fussing, bickering, came together. There is nothing wrong with disagreeing.

Until one person in this Congress or in the White House has 100 percent lock on God's truth all the time, then we need to argue, we need to debate. I would submit we need to be prayerful in how we approach what we should do, but it is good to debate.

I grew up in a family of four kids. We argued, fussed, bickered, but we came together as a family, and still do. In times of hurting, we still come to-

gether, and that is what we need to do as a nation.

I look forward to the day when there is no group that includes a race color, a skin color, in its name. I look forward to that day when it just doesn't matter. And it seems clear to me that as long as we keep calling out distinctions between ourselves with matters of race, creed, color, national origin, gender, age, that there will continue to be bias and prejudice further engendered.

I have seen video, including those recently, where I was horrified to see what happened. I didn't care what color the officer was. I didn't care what color the victim's skin color was. I was horrified that a victim would be treated as victims have been recently.

I look forward to the day when the percentage of people committing crimes, according to race, have no need of being kept because it doesn't matter. We care about how you act, not how you look. But as long as those numbers keep being kept, they need to all be looked at.

We need to get to the bottom of not just why so many African Americans are being killed in America—as we see from the numbers the FBI puts out, the huge majority are from other—the lives are taken by other African Americans. And I look forward to my friends getting upset about that someday, about the numbers of deaths in cities controlled by African Americans that have made it hard to possess guns unless you are a criminal.

I have people that want to constantly point to our justice system and say: See how unfair it is?

Well, in my court—I was asked just last week: Did you have any capital murder cases? Have you ever had cases where you had to look someone in the eye and pronounce the death sentence?

I had two. I tried three capital cases. They take a long time to try because—particularly with the jury selection.

Someone—the same person said skeptically: And let me guess; both of those were Black.

I look forward to the day when people don't skeptically assume that everything is about race. As it just so happens, the two of the three capital murder cases where I had to sentence someone to death, they were White defendants. The one case where the defendant did not get the death penalty, though he was convicted of murder, happened to be African American.

I had an issue raised by a defense attorney on a death penalty case out of another court, but in our county, and they were wanting—and I was subpoenaed as a witness to testify about the disproportionate number of African Americans who had not been allowed to be grand jury foremen.

□ 1330

When they actually got the list of my grand jury—the judge doesn't pick the grand juries. Those are selected by grand jury commissioners of different

racings, creeds, colors, and national origin. As long as they are American citizens, they picked the grand juries, and then the only thing the judge picks in Texas is the foreman. After they got the list of grand juries that I have presided over and they saw that there was disproportionately more African Americans who had been foremen of the grand juries, they told me they didn't want me as a witness because clearly I was not going to help their case.

But when I selected a foreman of a grand jury, I didn't care what their color was. I knew we needed good, sound leadership. Every person I ever selected as a foreman of a grand jury I knew was a caring, intelligent, and upstanding leader in our community. I didn't care what their color was.

Jesus said: "Greater love has no one than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." He certainly would know; He did exactly that. I love that being the first thing on the plaque for Father Damien, one of the two statues that we have in the Capitol from Hawaii.

Abraham Lincoln on September 5, 1864, said: "In regard to this Great Book"—and he capitalized "Great" and "Book," talking about the Bible—"I have but to say, I believe the Bible is the best gift God has given to man. All the good Saviour"—and I know that term offends so many, but this was Abraham Lincoln's own words. "All the good Savior gave to the world was communicated through this Book," the Bible. "But for this Book we could not know right from wrong. All things most desirable for man's welfare, here and hereafter, are to be found portrayed in it."

Mr. Speaker, I want to finish with a verse and a personal incident. Since Abraham Lincoln and most all of our Presidents have highly commended the use of the Bible as getting this Nation on track when we become dislodged, disoriented, and divisive, we go to Matthew 22:35: And one of them who was a lawyer—being a lawyer, you figure, leave it to lawyers to try to stir up trouble. One of them who was a lawyer tested Him by asking Him: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Some people wonder about it. What does He mean, on those two commands, love God, love each other, hang all the law and the prophets? What does He mean, all the law and the prophets hang on those two commands?

If you were to outline the Ten Commandments that God gave us and that most of our leaders in history have believed came from God, himself—and that is why Moses up here, directly above me, facing me, is the only full

face of the greatest lawgivers in the history of the world. It is because, at one time, all of the Supreme Court thought those Ten Commandments were great commandments. Now, probably at least four would say that maybe five or six were okay. But for most of our history, they have felt those ten were great commandments.

If you do an outline or you categorize all of those Ten Commandments, they all fit neatly under two categories: one, love God; and number two, love each other.

That came home very clearly to me years ago when my mother had a brain tumor. We knew it would eventually take her. The doctors had made that clear. They made clear that there was nothing more that could be done. Mother had said that she wasn't interested in seeing more doctors because they had said the same thing.

Since she was my lifelong English teacher—but especially my eighth grade English teacher—and she loved poetry, I threw one of her poems back at her from Dylan Thomas: “Rage, rage against the dying of the light . . . Do not go gentle into that good night.”

Mother wrote back. She was thrilled that I paid attention. But she quoted from another poem called “Thanatopsis” that talked about living with such faith that, at the end of life, you can lie down on the couch wrapped in covers around you.

Well, the doctors said: We don't think she has got all that much longer to live. They weren't quite accurate; but she had been reduced, this incredibly brilliant woman, to a wheelchair. It took her a long time to say things. This incredibly brilliant woman put herself through Baylor, 2½ years. Her parents lived right there by the campus, so she could work full-time and go to school. I didn't know until after she passed she was a member of a big honor society there.

But anyway, she loved our kids, and she loved our spouses. One weekend we decided, let's just have the four immediate children go back to Mount Pleasant and spend the weekend with Mom, and we did.

That Saturday morning, we sat around the breakfast table for hours like we did years before. We told stories, we laughed, and we made good-natured fun of each other. We would disagree, and then we would come back around and kid and love each other. We went on for 3 or 4 hours. Mother didn't say anything. But finally Mother said, “This,” and we all got quiet. We would stay there all night if it took it to hear what Mother had to say. And she got out, “is my favorite thing.”

That is all she had to say. When I left later that weekend to drive back to Tyler, it became clear that, if you were a heavenly parent, wouldn't you want your children loving you and loving each other? And all the law hang on those two: love your parent; love each other. It takes care of things. Then what Jesus said made perfect sense.

I look forward to the day when Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream will be fulfilled and nobody will care about Black lives matter and White lives matter. Nobody will care what color people are, and we will come together again without any hyphenation as Americans. But as long as we have leaders who continue to pick at a scab and refuse to let it heal, then our law officers are in danger, our country is in danger, and this little experiment with a democratic Republic is in severe jeopardy.

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

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 41 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, July 11, 2016, at noon for morning-hour debate.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

5944. A letter from the Board Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting the 2015 Annual Report on the Farm Credit System, pursuant to 12 U.S.C. 2252(a)(3); Public Law 92-181, Sec. 5.17(a)(3) (as amended by Public Law 100-399, Sec. 901(m)); (102 Stat. 1003); to the Committee on Agriculture.

5945. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Jeffrey W. Talley, United States Army Reserve, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 1370(c)(1); Public Law 96-513, Sec. 112 (as amended by Public Law 104-106, Sec. 502(b)); (110 Stat. 293); to the Committee on Armed Services.

5946. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General David L. Mann, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 1370(c)(1); Public Law 96-513, Sec. 112 (as amended by Public Law 104-106, Sec. 502(b)); (110 Stat. 293); to the Committee on Armed Services.

5947. A letter from the Senior Advisor, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Financial Stability Oversight Council's 2016 annual report, pursuant to 12 U.S.C. 5322(a)(2)(N); Public Law 111-203, Sec. 112(a)(2)(N); (124 Stat. 1396); to the Committee on Financial Services.

5948. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the report entitled “2015 Actuarial Report on the Financial Outlook for Medicaid”, pursuant to 42

U.S.C. 1396 note; Public Law 111-3, Sec. 506(c); (123 Stat. 95); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5949. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, FDA, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Food Additives Permitted in Feed and Drinking Water of Animals; Chromium Propionate; Extension of the Comment Period [Docket No.: FDA-2014-F-0232] received July 7, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5950. A letter from the Assistant Legal Adviser, Office of Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a report concerning international agreements other than treaties entered into by the United States to be transmitted to the Congress within the sixty-day period specified in the Case-Zablocki Act, pursuant to 1 U.S.C. 112b(d)(1); Public Law 92-403, Sec. 1; (86 Stat. 619); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5951. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Department of Defense, transmitting a proposed Letter of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Chile, Transmittal No. 16-39, pursuant to Sec. 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2776(b)(1); Public Law 90-629, Sec. 36(b) (as amended by Public Law 106-113, Sec. 1000(a)(7)); (113 Stat. 536); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5952. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. ACT 21-431, “Medical Marijuana Cultivation Center Expansion Temporary Amendment Act of 2016”, pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5953. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. ACT 21-432, “Sale to Minors Penalty Clarification Temporary Amendment Act of 2016”, pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5954. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. ACT 21-430, “New Bethany Baptist Church Real Property Tax Exemption Act of 2016”, pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5955. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. ACT 21-429, “Fair Shot Minimum Wage Amendment Act of 2016”, pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5956. A letter from the Executive Analyst (Political), Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a notification of a federal vacancy and designation of acting officer, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5957. A letter from the Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Federal Home Loan Bank of Dallas, transmitting the Federal Home Loan Bank of Dallas 2015 management report and financial statements, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 9106; Public Law 97-258, Sec. 9106; (96 Stat. 1044); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5958. A letter from the Chairman, Merit Systems Protection Board, transmitting the report entitled “Preventing Nepotism in the Federal Civil Service”, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 1204(a)(3); Public Law 95-454, Sec. 202(a) (as amended by Public Law 101-12, Sec. 3(a)(7)); (103 Stat. 17); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.