

Congress. Recently, my friend and colleague from Tucson, Congressman RON BARBER, himself a victim of gun violence which occurred during the tragic murders in Tucson—which included the serious wounding of our former colleague, Gabby Giffords—has also introduced legislation.

I am looking forward to being able to work with both Congressman MURPHY and Congressman BARBER, so that this Congress produces legislation to strengthen the opportunities to help people who are mentally ill.

We ought not to pretend that there is nothing we can do about these situations. Look at what happened with automobile safety. It has dramatically improved within a generation, once we stopped accepting the carnage on our roadways.

Auto deaths have been cut in half, serious injuries reduced, not with any single magic solution, but by patient, hard work involving step-by-step efforts to improve design and construction of automobiles, the education of drivers, and the enforcement of our laws.

Education, engineering, and enforcement can likewise make a big difference in reducing the epidemic of gun violence in America, and we certainly can do a better job of helping individuals and families in mental health crisis.

Let's not make a parody in The Onion be the reality of this Congress. Let's act. Tens of thousands of victims, past and future, including young Emilio Hoffman, demand our best efforts.

HONORING LINDA TOWSE FOR 35 YEARS OF SERVICE

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

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, Members of Congress rely a great deal on our staff for policy advice, research, interacting with constituents, and all of the other tasks that allow us to serve our districts.

Today, I would like to take a moment to recognize one member of my staff who has been the backbone of my office for over 35 years. Linda Towse started in my office on June 7, 1979, less than 2 months after I was elected.

Last week marked her 35th anniversary in our office. Before that, Linda worked with Senator Edward Brooke from Massachusetts. All told, Linda has been a congressional staffer for 42 years.

Always patient, always thoughtful, always thorough, Linda is what every Member wants in a staffer. She has helped countless Sixth District residents resolve issues with Federal agencies.

Hundreds of young people will remember Linda for her work coordinating their internship in my office or working with them while overseeing my service academy commission.

Birthdays are always remembered and celebrated thanks to her, and fellow staff rely on her years of wisdom and experience for learning the ropes and succeeding in their jobs.

She is our office historian and somehow locates any specific piece of paper when needed from the stack of papers on her desk.

We see staffers come and go, but it is rare to have one as dedicated as Linda and one who has served the Congress for over 40 years. Thank you, Linda, for your service to the Sixth District of Wisconsin over these many years.

CONGRATULATING AUDRA McDONALD

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I recognize Audra McDonald, an award-winning actress and singer from my hometown of Fresno, California.

Audra, who I have the pleasure of knowing personally, made history on Sunday, if you were watching the Tony Awards, when she received her sixth Tony Award. This win makes her the most statue-laden Tony Award winner in our Nation's history. Audra's most recent Tony Award was for her incredible portrayal of Billie Holiday in "Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill."

Audra, who grew up in Fresno, began her career with my friend Dan Pessano and the Good Company Players while attending Roosevelt High School. She then went on to graduate from the Juilliard School of New York in 1993. Audra has seen great success on Broadway, television, and in the opera.

In addition to having won three Tony Awards at the age of 28, Audra has also received numerous Grammy Awards, Drama Desk Awards, and Outer Critics Circle Awards. There is almost nothing that she hasn't performed in her field. She also has been able to display her talents at the White House and on the greatest stages in the world.

Audra is not only an exceptional actress, but also a wonderful, giving person. She actively gives back to her community and seeks to improve the lives of those around her, including her family.

Earlier this year, she held a benefit concert for Hands in the Community and is a supporter of marriage equality. She also sits on the advisory committee for Broadway Impact. Most importantly, she has always given credit to where credit is due, beginning with her parents who are respected educators in Fresno, who motivated and taught students as they taught Audra.

Audra McDonald is a source of pride and inspiration in the San Joaquin Valley and her hometown of Fresno, as well as around the world. I think it is important that we take special note of the talented people throughout our country who provide joy and the expe-

rience of the arts as this very, very fine individual has done, a star in her own right, Audra McDonald—hometown, Fresno, California.

FEDERAL RESERVE

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

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I have the Federal Reserve on my mind this morning.

You can't really get through the Federal Reserve in 5 minutes, Mr. Speaker, but I wanted to start down the road today because I saw a headline Bloomberg reported to say that what had been intended to be the beginning of an unwinding of a Federal Reserve balance sheet wasn't going to occur in the timely fashion that had been intended. This was news to me, based on what we have seen in the Budget Committee.

I have with me this morning the Federal Reserve Act authorization. Folks often wonder where the Federal Reserve comes from. The truth is it comes from the Federal Reserve Act.

I point to section 2A, "Monetary policy objectives." Its says that:

The Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve and the Open Market Committee shall maintain long-run growth of the monetary and credit aggregates commensurate with the economy's long-run potential to increase production, so as to promote effectively the goals of maximum employment, stable prices, and moderate long-term interest rates.

Now, I know there are some high school economic students out there who are thinking: Hey, wait a minute. Can you really promote stable prices, maximum employment, and moderate long-term interest rates with the same set of policies?

I share that high school economics concern about whether or not those three goals can be pursued collectively, but this is the mandate the Federal Reserve has, and this is why the Federal Reserve is involved in what they are involved in.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what I have here is the Federal Reserve balance sheet. It goes back to 2007, back when the Federal Reserve balance sheet was relatively stable. By stable, I mean it was at about \$800 billion—\$800 billion, the balance sheet of the Federal Reserve.

I want you to watch on the chart as we go out through these stable times, right up until the balance sheet triples in 2008. Now, when we are trying to promote economic stability, the tripling of any government balance sheet should be of concern. The Federal Reserve balance sheet triples in 2008.

Mr. Speaker, I hold in my hand a hearing transcript from my very first month on the Budget Committee. That occurred 3 years ago. It was 2011, and Chairman PAUL RYAN was questioning Ben Bernanke, then the Federal Reserve chairman.

Chairman RYAN said, “I want to talk to you about QE2”—quantitative easing 2—and what it is doing to the American economy.

Chairman Bernanke’s response was this, Mr. Speaker. He said:

What we are doing here is a temporary measure which will be reversed, so that at the end of this process, the money supply will be normalized, the amount of the Fed’s balance sheet will be normalized, and there will be no permanent increase, either in money outstanding, in the Fed’s balance sheet, or in inflation.

That was February 2011. I point to February 2011 on my chart here, Mr. Speaker, where the Federal Reserve chairman said that the balance sheet would begin to normalize.

What I want you to observe in the intervening months between February 2011, when normalization was discussed and projected, we have actually seen the balance sheet increase almost 100 percent. Today, we are met with the news that a return to a normalized balance sheet may be delayed even further.

Mr. Speaker, these are decisions on which no Member of this Chamber votes. These are decisions on which no member of America’s board of directors—being the American voters—have a voice, and this is a decision that will either rescue or destroy the economic future of this country.

It needs to be discussed more often, Mr. Speaker. I intend to bring these issues to the floor on a regular basis. No harm will come from shining the bright light of transparency on these Federal Reserve decisions. No harm will come from incorporating 330 million Americans into this debate about America’s economic security.

ALL-OF-THE-ABOVE ENERGY POLICY

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

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, we live in a country that is truly blessed with an abundant array of energy resources, yet despite major advances in technology in recent years that are allowing us to access even more of these energy resources, our country is sadly failing to take advantage of these opportunities and is imposing higher costs on all Americans.

My constituents and people across the country continue to struggle to keep up with high energy prices. With an average price of nearly \$4 for a gallon of gas in Michigan, middle class families in my district can’t understand why the Federal Government can’t get serious about developing an all-of-the-above energy policy.

For the past few years, House Republicans have been pursuing an all-of-the-above energy strategy. We understand that developing our resources at home won’t only lower energy costs, but it will grow good paying American jobs and ease the squeeze on the middle class.

The House has taken action to immediately ease that pain. In February, we passed H.R. 3826, the Electricity Security and Affordability Act, to put a check on the President’s and the EPA’s misuse of the Clean Air Act in pursuit of cap-and-trade.

In March, we passed H.R. 2824, the Preventing Government Waste and Protecting Coal Mining Jobs in America Act, which would protect coal mining from unnecessary, harmful, and useless Federal regulation. We need the resources, and our people need these jobs.

The House will continue standing up for the American people and against the President’s plans to increase utility costs. This week, I proudly cosponsored H.R. 3301, the North American Energy Infrastructure Act, a bill introduced by Chairman UPTON of the Energy and Commerce Committee, that will remove redtape that interferes with our ability to build the necessary infrastructure to move North American energy where it is needed most.

I expect the House will soon consider H.R. 3301 and a number of other bills that will lessen the squeeze of high energy prices, while protecting and creating new energy jobs that will grow a healthy economy and form a framework for all of our middle class and a real all-of-the-above energy plan.

HELPING FAMILIES IN MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS ACT

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

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last week, a gunman with a history of mental illness killed one and wounded two others at a Seattle university.

Just before Memorial Day, a young man known by his family and therapists to be mentally ill killed six people and himself in another awful episode of mass violence.

Before there was Elliot Rodger, there was Adam Lanza in Newtown; Jared Loughner in Tucson; James Holmes in Aurora, Colorado; and Aaron Alexis at the Washington Navy Yard.

There was Gus Deeds, another young man who was in a mental health crisis, but was denied extended inpatient care at a hospital before he killed himself and stabbed his father, a Virginia State senator.

All had untreated or undertreated serious mental illness. All spiraled out of control within a system that lacked the basic mechanisms to help. Many had parents who were pleading for more help.

How many more must die before we finally deal with our broken mental health system?

Violence amongst persons with mental illness is extraordinarily rare and is far more likely to be self-directed. Last year, there was 40,000 suicide deaths and almost 1 million attempts.

□ 1030

The mentally ill are more likely to be the victims of violence, robberies, beatings, rape, and other crimes. The mentally ill are also 10 times more likely to be in jail than a hospital. That is because the seriously mentally ill often encounter law enforcement after refusing medical care.

What makes these painful episodes so confounding is the reality that so many tragedies involving a person with mental illness is entirely preventable. For example, in 34 States, Elliot Rodger’s family would have been able to ask a court to order an emergency psychiatric evaluation, but in California the law says they cannot.

The families know when their loved one is in a mental health crisis and their condition is gravely deteriorating; but as our yearlong investigation performed at the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations revealed, families are shut out from being part of the care delivery system.

As revealed in our subcommittee review, for far too long, policymakers have been in denial about brain disease and serious mental illness as well as the need to address these medical issues in the policy arena. We pretend like it doesn’t exist and, therefore, don’t have policies in place to help families and patients in mental health crisis.

Congress has been more comfortable in the behavioral wellness realm than in confronting the difficult and painful reality that persons with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major clinical depression are more likely to end up homeless, in prison, or dead by suicide than in a meaningful health care treatment setting because of our failure to make courageous, substantive legislative changes.

We pretend that all the seriously mentally ill are fully aware of their symptoms and welcome treatment. The fact is many don’t. Forty percent of persons with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder do not even recognize their delusions and hallucinations aren’t real. They refuse treatment and don’t get better.

They have a right to get better, and don’t they have a right to get treatment?

Our investigation paved the way for the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act. With nearly 90 cosponsors, my bipartisan measure fixes the shortage of psychiatric hospital beds, clarifies HIPAA privacy laws so families are part of the frontline care, and helps patients get treatment well before their illness spirals into crisis. The bill has been endorsed by nearly a dozen publications, including The Washington Post, Seattle Times, San Francisco Chronicle, Wall Street Journal, and Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

Each day, I hear from families in crisis from across the country who are counting on our efforts to bring positive changes to the mental health system. We cannot let these families