

In the last 10 days, 239 Americans have been injured with guns. Now, some say, well, it is in home defense, it is accidental shootings. And that is true. Some of them are.

All this stuff is available to anybody who wants to take 5 minutes and do a simple Internet search like I did. There are dozens of reputable Web sites that have this information.

One of them, the Gun Violence Archive—simple statistics, not advocating, statistics—in 2015, the last calendar year, they list 13,433 deaths by gun. That is 36.8 per day. And, this year, we are on pace to exceed that. Of that, two children under the age of 11 per day were shot—two per day.

Yes, about 10 percent of the incidents were home invasions, defensive use, and accidental shooting, which is why none of us are trying to impede law-abiding American citizens from owning a gun. But that leaves 90 percent of the gun activity outside that. For us to not take action, in my opinion, is indefensible.

In 18 years, I have never participated in this Morning Hour discussion. I haven't done it because I find most of this, more often than not, somebody's reason to make a political statement. And I guess on some levels that is what I am doing right now.

But, on occasion, things get to the point where we, as a group, have to stand up, that we, individually, have to stand up and demand what is the simplest action imaginable—if you are too dangerous to fly, you are too dangerous to buy—the simplest action, put it on the floor.

I would respect someone for coming up and voting “no.” I would disagree, but at least they wouldn't be able to hide behind their own political rhetoric that somehow people like me are trying to pull guns away from them.

The truth is it is a simple action. And I will tell you, as a House Member, I am a bit embarrassed that the Senate was at least able to put it on the floor. At least they will have to answer to their constituents.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. CAPUANO. I understand that, Mr. Speaker. This issue has not expired, and this issue will not go away. And this issue will not be the end of this debate today or tomorrow, until we get a vote on these simple issues and do something to protect the children of America.

GUN VIOLENCE IN CHICAGO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, over last Father's Day weekend, 13 people were killed with guns in Chicago, my hometown. Another 46 were injured.

One of those critically injured was 3-year-old Devon Quinn. Devon and his

father were sitting in their green van when someone pulled up and started firing shots into a crowd of people. Devon was hit in the right shoulder by a bullet as he sat in his car. He was not the target, and he was another innocent victim in a terrible year of gun violence.

A 17-year-old boy was walking down 46th Street, and he was mowed down by an assault weapon.

According to the Chicago Tribune, about 1,800 people have been shot in Chicago this year. Over 200 of them have died from guns. When shootings becomes so commonplace, we risk forgetting how traumatic each one is for the people involved.

I recently received a letter from Kiara, a high school senior in my district, and she wrote:

Talking on the phone with a good friend a few nights ago, I heard the disturbing noise of gunshots. Feelings of fear overwhelmed me as my friend was talking as he was walking home from the train station after a long day at work.

Almost immediately, communication broke. I called back over and over again with no response. I was on the verge of a meltdown, thinking of what could have happened to him.

After what seemed like the longest 10 minutes of my life, I received a text letting me know that he was okay but needed to call 911, as someone had been shot by a drive-by shooting.

I sat there, frozen. What could I do? Then, thoughts of hopelessness and sadness took hold over me, and I thought about the family of this poor, innocent person who was just shot and how terrible that phone call must have been from the hospital.

I understand the need for guns and the role they play in protection in times of war and so on. But what I don't understand is the internal debate and menace within the United States over the use and misuse of weapons.

Too often, we forget the names of victims and the pain of their loved ones, as Congress continues to do nothing to stop the violence. Most don't even get that empty gesture of a moment of silence, and, even so, we have done 27 moments of silence since Sandy Hook.

How numb have we become to everyday violence that we only stop for that lone minute to recognize the most horrific shootings? Forty-nine victims in Orlando, schoolchildren in Newtown, churchgoers murdered in Charleston.

Just during the Senate filibuster on gun violence last week, 48 people were shot. As the mass shootings get worse and worse, we can't let these daily shootings fade into the background of America.

I know that my constituents feel frustrated and ignored when Congress responds to each of these tragedies with inaction. Angela wrote to me from the Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago, where I grew up:

I am writing to you as a frustrated and saddened constituent who is tired of watching innocent people die because the NRA holds our Congresspeople hostage.

I am begging you, on behalf of our students, teachers, police, LGBT, and every innocent person who has been affected by

senseless gun violence, to please use this moment to enact meaningful gun control in our country.

We have had decades of complacency from our government on this issue. It is no longer excusable, particularly for someone representing Chicago. You know where these legally purchased guns end up and that hundreds of our children and families pay the price for what selfish maniacs claim is their personal freedom.

And I have many more letters like those calling on those of us in Congress to do our job and reduce gun violence in our country. Neighbors ask me for action at the grocery store and at the gym and as I boarded the plane yesterday.

We can start by enacting two gun safety proposals that are overwhelmingly supported among our constituents, all of our constituents.

Close the terrorist loophole. If you are too dangerous to fly on an airplane, you should not be able to buy a gun. People can't even believe that that isn't the law already.

We need universal background checks. Forty percent of those guns used in violence in Chicago are bought legally at Indiana gun shows, where there are no background checks.

These proposals won't stop every single gun death, but we know that they will stop some. And, yes, there are a lot of other things we could do too.

I call on Speaker RYAN, along with my colleagues, to bring these bills to the floor before we break. Americans are calling for action on gun violence. They are tired of being ignored. No bill, no break.

THE NEED FOR UNIVERSAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, our Nation is still horrified and heartbroken over the brutal act of terror and hate that killed 49 and wounded many more in Orlando, Florida, just over a week ago.

We stand in solidarity with the loved ones of those who were lost, with the LGBT community that suffered this unimaginable act of violence, and the entire Orlando community as they work to move forward from this tragedy. We can work together to disarm hate.

Gun violence has become unacceptably commonplace in the country. The Orlando attack is only the latest and the most deadly mass shooting in the history of the United States. We have a responsibility to do more to keep guns out of the wrong hands.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is not just mass shootings that should be our focus. Guns have taken more lives in this country since 1968 than were lost in all the wars this Nation has ever fought. On average, more than 89 people each day die due to gun violence, whether that is by homicide, suicide, or accident. That is more than 33,000 Americans being killed by guns each year.

In just over the 3 years since Newtown, more than 111,300 people have been killed by someone using a gun in America. In my State of Maryland, in 2015 alone, more than 340 Marylanders have lost their lives to homicide by guns.

Yet, despite the national consensus for legislation to keep guns out of the hands of terrorists and convicted felons and domestic abusers, a vocal minority, led by the National Rifle Association, stands in the way of commonsense proposals to keep our Nation safer.

Those voices are forcing a false choice between constitutional rights and safe streets. We can do both. Congress can and must enact laws that improve the public safety while respecting the Constitution.

□ 1115

This Congress has no right to hold moments of silence anymore and then do nothing to prevent the next tragedy. This is a moment of truth for Congress. We cannot have another moment of silence without action. We can and should expand and strengthen our background checks and pass the bipartisan no fly, no buy bill to keep guns out of the hands of suspected terrorists.

So today what we know is that across this country there are people who go to unlicensed dealers at gun shows and do what they could not do if they went to Walmart to get a gun, and that is to get one without passing a background check. These unlicensed dealers are a significant source of crimes in my State and across the country, with an estimate of 40 percent of all purchases made through them without a background check.

Studies show that background checks actually do stop 170 felons, 50 domestic abusers, and 20 fugitives every single day from buying weapons. It works when you do it.

Recent polling shows that universal background checks are universally supported across the political spectrum. A CBS poll released just last week showed that 89 percent of the public supports legislation requiring background checks—the low-hanging fruit, the common denominator—and that includes 97 percent of Democrats, 92 percent of Republicans, and 82 percent of Independents. Who is left out? The vocal minority led by the National Rifle Association.

Let's talk about the National Rifle Association, Mr. Speaker, because they actually used to support universal background checks at gun shows.

On May 27, 1999, Wayne LaPierre, the current executive president and CEO of the National Rifle Association, testified before the House Judiciary Committee about 1 month before Columbine, in which 12 high school students and one teacher were murdered. He said this: "We think it's reasonable to provide mandatory instant background checks for every sale at every

gun show. No loopholes anywhere for anyone." That is a direct quote from Wayne LaPierre of the National Rifle Association.

When did they change? When it became politically expedient to do the job of the gun industry. So, unfortunately, they have flipped their position. They no longer support expanded background checks, and they have worked to prohibit that action here in Congress.

So I will say, Mr. Speaker, to Speaker RYAN and to my Republican colleagues: Enough already. We are tired. We are done. It is past time for the Congress to listen to the American public instead of to the National Rifle Association, to listen to the overwhelming number of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents, and to take guns out of the hands of terrorists, convicted felons, and those who would do harm to others.

No bill, no break. It is time to disarm hate.

COMMONSENSE GUN CONTROL

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

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all of my colleagues join me on the floor.

On occasion, Mr. Speaker, I have had what I call an executive session with myself. For months, even for years, through several sessions of Congress, I wondered what would bring this body to take action, what would finally make Congress do what is right, what is just, what the people of this country have been demanding, and what is long overdue.

We have lost hundreds and thousands of innocent people to gun violence: tiny little children, babies, students and teachers, mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, daughters and sons, friends and neighbors.

What has this body done? Mr. Speaker, nothing. Not one thing. We have turned deaf ears. We have turned deaf ears to the blood of the innocent and the concern of our Nation. We are blind to a crisis.

Mr. Speaker, where is the heart of this body? Where is our soul? Where is our moral leadership? Where is our courage? Those who work on bipartisan solutions are pushed aside. Those who pursue commonsense improvement are beaten down. Reason is criticized. Obstruction is praised.

Newtown, Aurora, Charleston, Orlando. What is the tipping point? Are we blind? Can we see? How many more mothers and how many more fathers need to shed tears of grief before we do something?

We were elected to lead, Mr. Speaker. We must be headlights and not tail-lights. We cannot continue to stick our heads in the sand and ignore the reality of mass gun violence in our Nation.

Deadly mass shootings are becoming more and more frequent. Mr. Speaker, this is a fact. It is not an opinion.

We must remove the blinders. The time for silence and patience is long gone. We are calling on the leadership of the House to bring commonsense gun control legislation to the House floor. Give us a vote. Let us vote. We came here to do our job. We came here to work.

The American people are demanding action. Do we have the courage? Do we have raw courage to make at least a down payment on ending gun violence in America?

We can no longer wait. We can no longer be patient. So today we come to the well of the House to dramatize the need for action—not next month, not next year, but now, today.

Sometimes you have to do something out of the ordinary. Sometimes you have to make a way out of no way. We have been too quiet for too long. There comes a time when you have to say something, when you have to make a little noise, and when you have to move your feet. This is the time.

Now is the time to get in the way. The time to act is now. We will be silent no more. The time for silence is over.

COMMONSENSE GUN CONTROL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) for 2 minutes.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues. For all of America that is listening, you just heard the soul of the United States Congress speak. The soul of this Nation cries out for a vote.

We are gathered here on this floor today to accomplish a single goal. We implore and we ask our colleagues—our colleague from Georgia stood on that side to appeal to the better angels on that side of the aisle—to provide us with the simple dignity that every American is calling for: a vote.

Mr. LEWIS. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON), my friend and brother, for yielding.

Now is the time for us to find a way to dramatize it, to make it real. We have to occupy the floor of the House until there is action.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, rise up, Democrats. Rise up, Americans. This cannot stand. We will occupy this floor. We will no longer be denied a right to vote.

Mr. HOYER. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland, our minority whip and leader.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, we sit down so we can stand up for America.