

### LIFTING OF MORATORIUM ON POSTAL CLOSURES

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

Ms. SEWELL. I rise today in support of America's postal workers, small businesses, senior citizens, and rural communities across this Nation. I stand before this Chamber gravely concerned about the future of the United States Postal Service and the impact of its fiscal crisis on communities across America.

The Postal Service is an iconic American institution woven into the fabric of our everyday lives. For more than 200 years, the men and women of the United States Postal Service have fulfilled their mission to deliver universal, trusted, timely, and effective service to the American people. Americans depend on the postal service, rain or shine, six days a week, from Montana to Alabama, from New York to California, from Florida to Alaska. Whether it's overnight, flat rate, first class, the United States Postal Service delivers.

Today, the Postal Service is teetering on the brink of insolvency and its future remains uncertain. Significant declines in first-class mail volume, evolving consumer trends, and increasing expenditures and operating costs mean that the Postal Service must reduce its footprint, reorganize, and take drastic measures to remain viable and competitive in the 21st century.

On May 15, the moratorium on postal closure will be lifted and thousands of post offices and mail processing facilities across this country will be targeted for closure. If Congress does not act, the lifting of this moratorium could mark the beginning of a slow and painful process of downsizing, layoffs, and reorganization for the U.S. Postal Service. We must take swift and decisive action to create a more efficient business model for the United States Postal Service. I believe that an investment in the future of the Postal Service is an investment in our economy, in small businesses, and in the American people. It requires our prompt attention and deserves our immediate action.

So much is at stake in this debate over postal reform. We know that reform is necessary, given the current market reality. But we cannot reform the postal service on the backs of the rural and underserved communities throughout this country. For so many of these communities, the post office is the meeting place—the place where you send your packages and receive your medicine.

The lifting of the moratorium on May 15 is an issue of utmost concern to the constituents that I represent in Alabama. In towns like Oak Hill, Magnolia, and Sawyerville, Alabama, the local post office is much more than a place for sending and receiving mail. Post offices are vital lifelines for these

rural, isolated communities. These lifelines must be preserved and protected. I am committed to ensuring that we as Americans have access to affordable, reliable, and efficient postal service.

Consider the ripple effect and the economic impact of the closure of a post office and how that may affect an entire community. Imagine small town America, where the local post office lies at the heart of the community and is an integral part of its history and identity. This is the case in many of the communities across my district. The fact is, the closure of postal offices will devastate small towns like Gainesville, Coy, and Myrtlewood, Alabama, and so many across this Nation.

Yes, we must all buckle up. We must all decide to show fiscal responsibility. And in these market conditions, we know that reductions are necessary. But surely we can do something to make sure that these reductions are not on the backs of the rural, underserved, and underprivileged communities. Many of the postal services that are being offered are irreplaceable in these communities. For seniors who can't leave their homes, mail carriers deliver lifesaving medication. And for small businesses, postal services like bulk and flat-rate mail enable them to grow and create jobs.

The United States Postal Service provides Americans with universal and invaluable service, and I urge my colleagues to come together and pass a bipartisan comprehensive plan for the future of the United States Postal Service that will not disproportionately affect underserved communities.

### ATF LONG GUN PROVISION IN CJS BILL

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

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my strong objection to an unwise and dangerous policy provision that is included in the Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations bill on the floor today. It would undermine the ability of Federal law enforcement to investigate and curb gun trafficking along the Southwest border.

In August of last year, the ATF began a program to require licensed gun dealers in the four most dangerous border States to report when an individual buys multiple assault rifles within 5 business days—just as all dealers have reported multiple handgun sales for over 20 years. The current rule is narrowly tailored to generate useful intelligence on illegal gun trafficking by Mexican drug cartels. According to ATF data, 70 percent of firearms recovered and traced in drug cartel crimes in Mexico originated from the United States. We know that semiautomatic assault rifles sold by U.S. dealers near the border fuel Mexican cartel violence—violence that has killed more than 47,000 people in Mexico, including thousands of police and military personnel.

This rule is working. In just the past 9 months, ATF opened more than 120 criminal investigations based on multiple assault rifle sales reports. And this action is constitutional. The rule is indisputably constitutional. The authority to operate such a program has been upheld by Federal courts. So there's no question about the legal authority. But this bill that we will vote on today, at the behest of the NRA and other gun groups, would block funding for this vital law enforcement program.

Unfortunately, this is only the latest in a long list of irresponsible actions this Congress has taken on gun policy, such as the fact that due to Congressional action, loaded firearms are now permitted in National Parks. The D.C. voting rights bill that enjoyed joint bipartisan support was scuttled by requiring restrictions on the D.C. City Council regarding the type of gun safety laws that they could enact if they wanted their right to vote.

Restrictions blocking State and local law enforcement access to important crime gun trace data were made permanent. Just last year, the House passed legislation to override the concealed carry requirements of individual States, establishing a lowest common denominator Federal standard.

Despite all of these actions to weaken gun laws, judging by the outlandish statements from the NRA, you would think that the Second Amendment was under constant bombardment. Wayne LaPierre, vice president of the NRA, said last year that the claim that the Obama administration has done virtually nothing to restrict the rights of gun owners is "a big fat stinking lie." He went further to claim that the President's lack of action is "all part of a massive Obama conspiracy to deceive voters and hide his true intentions to destroy the Second Amendment in our country." Again, another LaPierre quote.

Actions are supposed to speak louder than words, but apparently for some people, crazy conspiracy fantasies speak loudest of all.

Instead of weakening gun laws further, we should be passing commonsense measures that are supported by the vast majority of Americans. In fact, according to a poll conducted by Republican pollster Frank Luntz, 82 percent of NRA members and 86 percent of non-NRA gun owners support prohibiting suspected terrorists from purchasing guns; 69 percent of NRA members and 85 percent of non-NRA gun owners support background checks for all gun sales at gun shows.

□ 1050

And yet the NRA opposes these commonsense restrictions and gets this Congress to do so as well.

There are bills introduced in Congress right now to address these two issues, the Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Act and the Fix Gun Checks Act. Neither one has received so much as a subcommittee hearing in this Republican Congress.