

wait? How many more people have to die to move us to act? How many more American towns and cities must be added to the constantly growing list of places like Orlando and Columbine and Aurora and Charleston and Newtown?

Moments of silence aren't enough. Thoughts and prayers are not enough. In fact, the Scriptures teach us that such pieties give grave offense when they mask a refusal to do what we know is right. We need action. I call on my colleagues to bring these common-sense proposals to the floor for a vote.

ONGOING PEACE PROCESS IN COLOMBIA

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

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud and encourage the ongoing peace process in Colombia.

Over the last 52 years, Colombia has witnessed an armed conflict between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC. The conflict has taken a serious toll on the country: 220,000 people have been killed and more than 6.8 million people have been forced from their homes. The fighting has been especially difficult for the rural areas of the country.

But a new day is on the horizon for the people of Colombia. The country is on the verge of a historic peace agreement with the FARC. In fact, the government and the FARC signed a ceasefire agreement on June 23. This was seen as one of the few remaining roadblocks to a final peace agreement.

With all that is going on in the world today, it would be easy to miss the important progress taking place in Colombia. The peace process isn't garnering the media attention that some other foreign affairs are, but it is going to have just as important an impact on global affairs.

Last year, I had the opportunity to travel to Colombia with the Committee on Armed Services and my colleague from Arizona, Mr. GALLEGRO, whose mother is from Colombia. It didn't take long for me to realize that Colombia is a beautiful and fascinating country, and I was very impressed with the hospitality of the Colombian people. It also became clear during my trip that the majority of Colombian people want things to be better in their country, and they are committed to the peace process.

Mr. Speaker, Colombia is our closest and strongest ally in Latin America, so the peace process is very important not only to Colombia, but also to the United States. Their future opportunities are also ours.

Colombia has a growing economy with immense potential based on their abundant natural resources and a culture that values hard work. A more stable Colombia will allow the country to further expand their economy, which would be a benefit to us right here at home.

At a time when there are so many foreign policy challenges around the globe, Colombia is a rare success story. The country was literally on the verge of becoming a failed state, but now they are a leader in the region. The United States maintains significant bilateral relations and has provided important diplomatic assistance to the Colombian Government, but we have done so without becoming overly involved in their local affairs.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize my strong support for the Colombian peace process, and I call on every Member of this House to also lend their support to that process. We need to encourage our neighbors in South America. I want to commend President Santos for his leadership and his commitment to a lasting peace.

I also want to highlight the important work of Ambassador Pinzón. I appreciate his friendship, and I applaud his work to strengthen the partnership between the United States and Colombia.

Ultimately, only the people of Colombia can reach the lasting peace agreement that restores justice and order to their country, but the United States can—and I believe we must—stand ready to assist the Colombian Government as they finalize this process and then as they move their country out of conflict and into a period of stability and lasting peace.

ANOTHER AMERICAN SHOT DOWN BY THE POLICE

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I had planned to talk about something else this morning, but the events of the last 12 hours changed my plans.

I watched this morning on TV and online—like a lot of Americans—another of our fellow Americans shot down by the police. This time it was in St. Paul, Minnesota. Earlier this week, it was in Baton Rouge. But we know it is everywhere—in Chicago, in Baltimore, in South Carolina.

It seems that every week or month another Black man is shot by the police, and we always have the same reaction: Oh, it is a tragedy; there should be an investigation. A lawsuit is filed, and another settlement. Oh, the Justice Department and the FBI need to oversee the investigation because we cannot trust the police to police themselves. And then we go back to business as usual, and nobody actually does anything.

State by State, city by city, and county by county, we might make this reform or that reform, but there is no national strategy to stop police from killing people, especially Black people, especially Black men.

I wept this morning as I watched the mother of Philando Castile describe her son. She said he had a job, he served children in the cafeteria, and

that he was a calm young man. She also said that he was not a thug.

Why does a Black woman in the 21st century in the United States of America, while a Black man sits in the Oval Office, almost 50 years after Martin Luther King, Jr., was gunned down, why does she have to start her description of her son with "He was not a thug"? She said: "We are being hunted."

Mr. Speaker, this is another sad chapter in American history.

I do not feel compelled to say in describing my grandson Luisito: Well, first and foremost, he is not a gang banger, he is not a thug. But for this Black mother and for a lot of African American mothers in this country, that is something they feel a necessity to say.

This mother did everything right. Her son was still shot dead by the police. This young man was riding in the passenger seat of a car with his fiancée and 4-year-old little daughter in the backseat.

He had a permit to carry a weapon, which he announced to the police. So he had gone through the background check, gone through the training, and had the concealed carry permit. But he was shot dead in front of his loved ones, his fiancée and daughter.

Why is it in 21st century America we have to have a conversation about how to avoid being shot by the police? Why do I have to instruct my grandson about deescalation if he comes in contact with the police, about strategies to prevent a sworn public servant, an officer of the court, a trained member of law enforcement, and I have to instruct my teenage grandson how to prevent that person from shooting him to death for no reason? Why, Mr. Speaker?

We have no national strategy, no national conversation. When Americans are literally crying out in the streets that, yes, Black lives matter, we have no response from the Congress, the people's House. None.

The head of the FBI announces he won't press charges against a candidate in the Democratic Party. Stop everything; we need to have hearings, congressional hearings. Benghazi, let's spend millions on hearings, political hearings. Planned Parenthood, let's form a special committee to do what the majority party feels is important from their political point of view.

But a young Black man is shot by police in his car in cold blood? Nothing. Young men are shot by police, videotapes are withheld from the public, and nothing happens.

Mr. Speaker, I think Black lives matter. I think the lives of young men in inner cities across this country matter. And I think this Congress should be the place where America comes together to decide what we are going to do about young Black men getting shot by the police. Not next week, when it is going to happen again. Not next month, when it is going to happen again. Not waiting safely until after the election,