No community should ever be forced to experience the grief and trauma that my constituents are now confronting. It is more urgent than ever that we take meaningful action to reduce the toll of widespread gun violence. The time is now.

RECENT FY 2017 NUCLEAR DEAL

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the significance of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action regarding Iran, more commonly referred to as the Iran nuclear agreement. I have always been a vocal advocate for tough sanctions on Iran. While I was a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, in 2010, I was a member of the group of 47 U.S. senators who drafted the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act. These sanctions, in 2010 and subsequently, did make a difference.

Unfortunately, Iran continues to support terrorist organizations, and its record on human rights is well known. But we should not withhold certification of the Iran nuclear agreement without credible evidence that Iran is not complying. Let’s remember, this agreement has always been about Iran, not obtaining nuclear weapons.

Doing so would strip the United States of our credibility in future international agreements not just with Iran, but with allies as well.

In addition to Iran, we negotiated the nuclear agreement with the United Kingdom, Germany, European Union, China, and Russia, and we must keep our word. In other words, to remain a world leader, the United States cannot change positions on international agreements from one administration to another without serious justification and without the consent in working with our allies.

Especially now, as we are facing an increasing threat with North Korea, we must work with our allies and, together, make a safer world through a comprehensive strategy that involves diplomacy, sanctions, and, yes, deterrence. If we must use such force, we have methods for addressing Iran’s nonnuclear behavior besides refusing to continue to advocate for the use of these tools to take a strong stance against Iran.

comprehensive strategy that involves diplomacy, sanctions, and, yes, deterrence. If we must use such force, we have methods for addressing Iran’s nonnuclear behavior besides refusing to continue to advocate for the use of these tools to take a strong stance against Iran.

The history, culture, achievements, and nonnuclear behavior besides refusing to continue to advocate for the use of these tools to take a strong stance against Iran. Have methods for addressing Iran’s nonnuclear behavior besides refusing to continue to advocate for the use of these tools to take a strong stance against Iran.

The Iran nuclear agreement with the United States and its people have been critical in shaping our Nation and the valley that I have the honor to represent. For over 250 years, since the formation of the United States, immigrants have come from all over the world to America to have a better life for themselves and, in turn, have made us the greatest country in the world.

During Hispanic Heritage Month, I am honored to celebrate the community whose determination and achievements are an integral part of not only our Nation, but the San Joaquin Valley that I have the honor to represent.

SUPPORT FOR NFL FOOTBALL PLAYERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise and stand in the well of the Congress of the United States of America. I am always honored that I have this opportunity, and I see it as a preeminent privilege to be able to stand in the well of the Congress of the United States of America.

I love my country. I have said it many times. I stand here at this podium. I salute the flag, Mr. Speaker. I say the Pledge of Allegiance. I sing the national anthem. I love my country.

And because I love my country, I can stand here in the well of the House of the United States of America and announce that I support the NFL men, who are professional football players. I can say I support them because I believe in what the flag stands for: liberty and justice for all. I believe in this. And if there is to be liberty and justice, then they are a part of has to be called to the attention of the American public. I support the NFL players, Mr. Speaker.

To those who say that “they are so lucky, they are making millions, why don’t they just play football, they ought to be happy,” first, let me comment in this way: They are earning millions. Their bodies are being torn apart, in many cases. They are earning millions. They are earning millions. They suffer after they leave football. They are earning millions. And they are also earning pain as they play a game that amuses many.

So those who say they are making millions of money and they ought to just go away, I contend that they are not doing it for the money. They are doing it because they understand injustice anywhere is still a threat to justice everywhere, as Dr. King put it. They want to eliminate the injustice that they see, and, in so doing, they have decided to take a knee.

I salute the flag. I support my country. I love my country. And I respect what they are doing in the form of peaceful protest to bring about change that ought to have been brought about decades or centuries ago; should have been, but has not been. Yes, we have come a long way, but we sure have a long way to go.

Now, to those who say “they have earned millions, why aren’t they happy,” well, it is not hush money.

Is that what you are saying, that when they get paid, is hush money that says that they don’t have freedom of speech? Does that check negate their freedom of speech?

I think not. Freedom of speech is something that you cherish, whether you live in a mansion or you live under a bridge. Freedom of speech belongs to you. It doesn’t matter your station in life. It doesn’t matter your ethnicity. It doesn’t matter your religiosity. Freedom of speech belongs to you because you are a child of God and you live in the greatest country in the world.

So I stand in support of the NFL players. I want them to continue. I want them to stand their ground. And I want those who were thwarted to know that you are trying to thwart injustice. When you try to reframe the subject and make it about something that it is not, you are trying to thwart injustice. Even if you don’t do it with intentionality, that is the reality.

We cannot allow injustice to continue. And I thank God that there are those who are making millions, those who are having their bodies abused, who are willing to take a stand by taking a knee against injustice, and they still respect this country and its flag and this anthem.

If there is one among them who has other thoughts, then I don’t support them. I support the righteous cause and who are respectful of the country, who can love the flag and still protest. I support that.