



## Letters to the Editor, Dec. 5



### MHS lockdown should be a wake-up call

Last week's lockdown at Montclair High School and Renaissance Middle School was a real wake-up call. The district was lucky. No one was physically injured in the incident, and no gun was found...this time. But we don't know if we'll be so lucky in the future.

In our town and across the country, irresponsible gun ownership means children have easy access to guns. While it may be hard to buy a gun in New Jersey, it's easy to buy one in Pennsylvania or Maryland and bring it over the state line. Weak gun laws impact everyone.

Mass shootings garner a lot of attention. But people need to pay attention to what happened last week at our high school. Our children are scared. Our teachers are scared. My friends said that the hour-long lockdown was the worst hour of their lives as they urgently texted their kids who were crouching under desks and hiding in closets. I'm grateful that there was no shooter, but that doesn't mean no harm was done. These children and parents spent an hour thinking an armed gunman was on campus.

This is not OK. 100 Americans die by gun every single day. We owe it to our children to do more. We need background checks on all gun sales. We must demand that Sen. Mitch McConnell introduce HR8 to the Senate

floor, a bill that passed the House, but has been stalled for months since. I'm sick of worrying if our school is next.

Text "READY" to 64433 or go to [www.momsdemandaction.org](http://www.momsdemandaction.org) to learn more.

**JAIME BEDRIN**

**Montclair**

*The writer is a volunteer with Moms Demand Action. She will speak on a panel following the reading of "24 Gun Control Plays" on Dec. 9 at Montclair State University.*

## Kudos to Payne for cosponsoring climate bill

The Montclair chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby applauds Rep. Donald Payne Jr. for cosponsoring the bipartisan Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act in the U.S. House of Representatives. This groundbreaking bipartisan climate solution to price carbon will give revenue to households and bring greenhouse gas emissions down 90 percent by 2050.

Led by Florida Democrat Rep. Ted Deutch and Florida Republican Rep. Francis Rooney, and cosponsored by 72 other members of Congress, the policy puts a fee on fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas. It starts low, at \$15 per ton, and grows \$10 per ton each year. The money collected from the carbon fee is allocated in equal shares every month to the American people to spend as they see fit. Ultimately, the bill will not only cut emissions of greenhouse gases, but also create over 2 million new jobs, lower health care costs and promote energy innovation.

Payne's endorsement comes on the heels of a meeting between local climate activists Shalini Teneja, Maya Savoie, and Patrick McCarthy with staffers at Rep. Payne's office in Washington DC, as part of CCL's November lobby day. Members of Montclair CCL have been meeting regularly with Payne's office since the local group was founded in 2013, and we are delighted that he has signed on to the bill.

The impact of climate change is already being felt across New Jersey. A recent Washington Post analysis found that New Jersey is one of the fastest warming states in the country. Sea-level rise is also expected to hit New Jersey hard, with ocean levels rising between three and eight feet by the end of the century.

The bipartisan Energy Innovation Act is a critical first step to contain the effects of climate change and preserve a livable world for our children and grandchildren. It provides a common sense approach to solving climate change that's a win-win. It benefits us throughout Essex County by cleaning up our air and giving us monthly dividend checks. We are so grateful to Rep. Payne for stepping up to support this bipartisan climate bill.

**ELLEN BERKOWITZ**

**Montclair**

*The author is the group leader of the Montclair Citizens' Climate Lobby.*