

I want to take this time to honor Mike for his hard work in making Illinois one of the top community college States. The future of William Rainey Harper and J. Stanley Brown's experiment looks bright because of Mike's work. We thank him for his service and look forward to his next chapter in life.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for votes on June 18, 2019.

Had I been present, I would have voted no on both cloture and confirmation of the nomination of Sean Cairncross to be Chief Executive Officer of the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

I would have also voted no on cloture on the nominations of Matthew J. Kacsmayk to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Texas, Allen Cothrel Winsor to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Florida, James David Cain, Jr., to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana, and Greg Gerard Guidry to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I wish to speak in support of legislation to address the ever increasing instances of gun violence and to urge our Republican colleagues to finally join us in our effort to save lives.

I became mayor of San Francisco as a result of gun violence, and from my first day in the Senate, trying to reduce the number of lives needlessly lost to gun violence has been my mission. I authored the Federal assault weapons ban that was in place from 1994 to 2004. Since that ban expired 15 years ago, the number of mass shootings has risen dramatically.

According to data from Mother Jones, which defines a mass shooting as four or more people killed, we have suffered through 77 such massacres, leaving 643 dead and 1,055 injured. That is why I have introduced an updated assault weapons ban, which will keep weapons of war off of our streets. Compared with the 10-year period before the 1994 Federal assault weapons ban, the number of gun massacres between 1994 and 2004 fell by 37 percent. The number of people dying from gun massacres fell by 43 percent. The fact is that the assault weapons ban worked.

Firearms like the AR-15 have become the mass shooter's weapon of choice, and they become even more dangerous with the use of modifications like bump stocks. We will never forget that, in 2017 in Las Vegas, 58 people were killed and 422 wounded in our Nation's worst mass shooting.

Simply put, there is no reason why civilians need weapons like these. They are not for protection, and they are not for hunting. They are weapons of war

designed to take lives, and that is why we need to reinstate the assault weapons ban.

Since 1966, there have been 163 mass shootings with at least four people killed; 1,165 people have lost their lives, 189 of whom were children or teenagers.

The statistics on school shootings are even more sobering. Since the shooting at Columbine in 1999, there have been 239 school shootings nationwide; 302 people have been injured, 144 people killed, and 228,000 children exposed to gun violence.

I have said before that I thought things were going to change after what happened in Newtown. I still have a framed copy of the Daily News cover with the pictures of the beautiful children whose lives were taken that day and the headline "Shame on U.S.," for failing to pass the assault weapons ban. But things didn't change because my Republican colleagues lacked the courage to stand up to the National Rifle Association. I hope that can change now and that Senator MCCONNELL will finally call up legislation to prevent more lives from being needlessly lost, including the lives of our children.

In addition to reinstating the assault weapons ban, we should be doing more. In particular, the Senate should immediately consider the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act, the Violence Against Women Act, and universal background checks. Each of these bills should be part of a comprehensive strategy to prevent further shootings, and we must act quickly.

To that end, I have introduced the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act of 2019. This bill would give grants to States to enact extreme-risk laws. These are laws that allow family members and law enforcement officers to get court orders to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people.

Fifteen States and the District of Columbia already have extreme-risk laws on the books, and they work. San Diego has had particular success with California's law. In a little more than a year, that office has obtained 126 orders and confiscated 318 guns, including 33 assault weapons.

Earlier this year, I received a letter from the San Diego city attorney. Here is an excerpt from that letter: "Our office has found California's red flag law to be a powerful tool for protecting residents and police officers from senseless gun violence. Gun-rights advocates closely monitor our work; they have yet to bring to our attention a case where they believe the GVRO was improperly granted." Simply put, extreme-risk laws protect due process, and they save lives.

Similarly, the Violence Against Women Act, which has already passed the House, addresses gun violence by keeping guns out of the hands of domestic abusers. It does this in three ways. First, the bill makes it a Federal crime for someone under an ex parte domestic violence order to possess a firearm. An ex parte hearing means

that the abuser is not there, but there are still due process protections. The judge must still consider evidence, and the order itself is only temporary. These sorts of orders are only issued in the most dangerous situations, which is why it is so important that we ensure these sorts of abusers cannot purchase or possess firearms while the order is in place.

Second, it closes the so-called boyfriend loophole. This is an important update to the law so that, if someone is convicted of committing domestic violence against the person he or she is dating, they cannot possess firearms. These are situations where someone has already been convicted of committing an act of domestic violence. The presence of firearms in domestic violence situations raises the chance that someone will die by 500 percent. Preventing this is common sense.

Third and finally, the House bill prohibits people convicted of stalking from possessing a firearm. Once again, this means someone has already been convicted in a court of repeatedly following and harassing someone else.

For me, there is no question that domestic abusers should be barred from purchasing or possessing firearms.

There was a recent article in the Washington Post titled, "The latest shooting attacks show how the U.S. stands apart from the world. It ends with the line: "It may not be possible to completely replicate Australia's success, but why there has been no effort even to try is a question that puts national lawmakers to shame."

I agree. It is far past time for my Republican colleagues to join me in passing commonsense gun reform. It is far past time to act, and we are needlessly losing more lives every day to gun violence.

Thank you.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO WENDELL HANSON

• Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Wendell Hanson, as he celebrates his centennial birthday this year. Wendell was born on August 4, 1919, in Sioux Falls, SD.

Wendell Hanson graduated from Washington High School in Sioux Falls. He attended 1 year of college at Augustana College in Sioux Falls before transferring to the University of Texas, where he was President of Alpha Phi Omega.

Wendell enlisted in Active Duty in the Army Air Force on September 5, 1941, and served in World War II as a B-25 combat pilot in low-altitude attack missions from bases in China and India. He was flight leader under General C. L. Chennault's 14th Air Force Flying Tigers. Among the medals he was awarded are the Distinguished Flying Cross for distinguishing himself by heroism and extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight, the

Air Medal with oakleaf cluster, three Bronze Stars, and China's Liberation Medal. After his tour of duty in the war overseas, he taught instructor pilots how to teach combat air tactics to pilots. He served in the Air Force Reserve and retired in 1964 as a lieutenant colonel.

On August 11, 1945, Wendell married Helen A. Brumbaugh at First United Methodist Church in Sioux Falls. Wendell met Helen when she was a teacher at Vermillion High School. In January of 1945, he flew to Sioux Falls from Texas and drove his father's car to Vermillion to recruit potential Air Force pilots. Prior to speaking with students, he spoke with Helen for a few minutes in a school hallway. A month later, without further communication, Wendell sent a letter to Helen asking her to marry him. Helen replied, "I do not even know you well enough to say no." After many months of letters, Helen said, "Yes." They lived near Waco, TX, while Wendell taught instructor pilots at Lackland Air Force Base, then moved to Ann Arbor, MI, for 2 years before finally returning to Sioux Falls.

Wendell and Helen had five children, Doug, Gail, Gary, Allen, and Martha, as well as eight grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

As a dedicated public servant, Wendell served in the South Dakota Senate from 1977-78 and from 1981-1982. In his spare time, he enjoys golf, international travel, pheasant hunting, fishing, and camping. He was an active member of Hope Lutheran Church, where he served as President of the congregation and Sunday school teacher. He was also a member of Peace Lutheran Church and currently attends Abiding Savior Lutheran.

I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Wendell Hanson for his service to our country and wish him a very happy 100th birthday, good health, and prosperity.●

TRIBUTE TO PHILIP JONES

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I am pleased to recognize Philip Jones, the Jackson County Teacher of the Year from Marianna High School in Marianna, FL.

To Philip, his job is to improve a student's reading and writing skills. He believes this is best achieved through an openness to dynamic academic and social changes. Philip designed his English class curriculum with structured plans, which builds trust in his students after the first 9 weeks of the school year and allows them to communicate with him during class and through written assignments clearly and without negative distractions.

Philip has taught 10th grade English at Marianna High School for 6 years and serves as the chairperson for the English Department. He has also received the Florida Department of Education's High Impact recognition 3 years in a row. Philip earned his bach-

elor's degree in political science from the University of Florida in 2000 and his master's degree in environmental law from Vermont Law School in 2004.

I extend my best wishes to Philip for his dedication to his English students and look forward to hearing of his continued success in the coming years.●

TRIBUTE TO TRACY KERBY

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I honor Tracy Kerby, the Lafayette County Teacher of the Year from Lafayette High School in Mayo, FL.

An eighth grade language arts teacher since 2006, Tracy's colleagues note that she is always looking for opportunities to grow as an educator. Tracy is a great leader for her students to follow because of her high moral character and her desire to set her students up for success later in life.

Tracy loves being a teacher in the Lafayette District Schools because she has the ability to watch her students learn and grow. She enjoys watching her students succeed in class, athletics, at local fairs, or with volunteer events at their church.

I express my best wishes and gratitude to Tracy and look forward to hearing of her continued success in the coming years.●

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES MEARSHEIMER

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Charles Mearsheimer, the Collier County Teacher of the Year from Oakridge Middle School in Naples, FL.

Charles has taught U.S. history at Oakridge Middle School for the past 16 years and has worked in education for 24 years.

Charles believes in his students' ability to achieve success and in the invaluable power of teaching to ignite the passion for learning that will follow them as they grow throughout their educational journey. He also serves as an unofficial mentor for new staff members, passing along his own passion for teaching. Both his colleagues and students feel the contagious effect of his enthusiasm and has led to Charles being one of the most requested teachers at his school.

I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to Charles for his dedication to his students and look forward to hearing of his continued success in the years ahead.●

TRIBUTE TO JEANNINE MEIS

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Jeannine Meis, the Leon County Teacher of the Year from Leon High School in Tallahassee, FL.

A teacher in the Leon County School district for 16 years, Jeannine is an educator who is consistently modifying her curriculum to create lesson plans that help her to connect with her stu-

dents while creating an atmosphere that is encouraging. Before Jeannine started her tenure at Leon High School, she taught elementary school at the Apalachee Tapestry Magnet School of the Arts and middle school students at Cobb Middle School, where she had the privilege of teaching some of her students again.

I express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Jeannine for her work and look forward to learning of her continued success in her future endeavors.●

TRIBUTE TO LEIGH NORRIS

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I am pleased to honor Leigh Norris, the Hamilton County Teacher of the Year from Hamilton County Elementary School in Jasper, FL.

Peggy Sue Hasty, principal at Hamilton County Elementary School, described Leigh as a fine example of a dedicated teacher who works hard to ensure her students achieve academic success.

A sixth grade math teacher who has worked in the district for 21 years, Leigh considers teaching the profession she was born to do. She loves to inspire a passion for learning math, and shares the excitement with her students when they make gains or solve challenging problems on their own.

I offer my best wishes to Leigh for her work and look forward to hearing of her continued success in the coming years.●

TRIBUTE TO JUDITH PARIS

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I honor Judith Paris, the Wakulla County Teacher of the Year from Shadeville Elementary School in Shadeville, FL.

Judy's teaching philosophy guides her students to thrive in environments where they are encouraged to explain their thinking and also understand how their classmates think. She works to create a classroom that facilitates a love of learning and where students build self-confidence.

In her classes, groups of students often begin the school year at 40-50 percent proficiency in math and consistently improve their math scores to 90 percent or higher by the end of the school year. She credits their success to the instructional practices that she teaches to make students solve problems on their own and by working together.

Judy is a fifth grade math teacher and is also her school's math team leader and chair of the mathematics committee and coteaches faculty workshops on accelerated math. Judy earned her bachelor's degree in technical writing with a minor in mathematics from Louisiana State University and earned a post baccalaureate degree in mathematics education. She is certified in elementary education, middle school math, and high school math.