

magazines, we are going to make sure everyone has the opportunity, and the Republicans can catch up. We can have the first amendment, the Toomey-Manchin amendment—I don't know if it is a Democratic amendment or a Republican amendment, but that is the first one we are going to do. After we get through these two things, we will have the Republicans. If they are two or three behind, they can catch up with us and then we can alternate back and forth. Even though there is no rule requiring it, that is the best way to move forward.

I am grateful to everyone we are here and able to start legislating on this issue that has caught the attention of the American people and, frankly, the world.

#### ORDER FOR RECESS

Mr. President, we are having a joint meeting. I ask unanimous consent the Senate recess from 12:30 until 2:30 today to allow for a joint caucus meeting, and that all time during recess and morning business count postcloture on the motion to proceed to S. 649.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. I note the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, before I make a statement relative to an unrelated issue, I just want to say a very quick word about the historic vote that took place a few minutes ago on the floor of the Senate. I believe we had 16 Republicans who joined us in an effort to proceed to a bill that will initiate a debate—one of the first in years—on the floor of the Senate about gun safety in America.

I salute those Members of the Senate from both sides of the aisle who supported that motion to proceed, but especially from the other side. I know it took a great deal of courage, political courage, for them to step up and to at least initiate this debate. I will tell you, there were those among them—some 13—who signed a letter saying: We are going to filibuster this matter to stop it. They did not succeed today in that effort because 16 on the Republican side joined us. I do not presume they are going to vote for all or any of the amendments to be offered. But at least they allowed the Senate to be the Senate instead of having us bogged down—as we have over 400 times in the last 6 years—in a filibuster.

I hope during the course of this debate on the floor we are able to have amendments debated and voted on. The majority leader made that request earlier, and I believe, for the good of this

Senate—and certainly for the debt we owe to America to address the issues of the day—we should address them in a bipartisan fashion in courteous but thorough debate. That is what the Senate has stood for as an institution, and I hope it does, and continues to.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. DURBIN and Mr. COONS pertaining to the introduction of S. 718 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. COONS. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:30 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:29 p.m., recessed until 2:30 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. HEITKAMP).

#### SAFE COMMUNITIES, SAFE SCHOOLS ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. MURPHY. I come down to the floor for the second time today and maybe the fifth time over the last 2 days to talk again about the real reason we are here on the floor of the Senate this week and next week—to talk about the scourge of gun violence across the country and its victims.

We have had a good week this week on the floor of the Senate—a breakthrough on the matter of background checks, an agreement that we hope can forge the basis of a bill next week, an agreement that maybe doesn't move us as far as some of us would like in terms of making sure criminals in this country don't have guns but that moves us very far down the line toward a day when no criminals can go onto the streets of this country with guns, and then a very positive vote today in which Democrats and Republicans joined to break a threatened filibuster.

But these are the kids we are really here to talk about, and I wanted to come down before the week was over to talk about a few more victims just to make sure we are really clear about whom and what we are talking about.

Let me tell you about Chase Kowalski, one of the 7-year-olds killed by the gunman's bullets in Sandy Hook Elementary School. He was an amazing little kid. He was an athlete. Much like

Jack Pinto, whom I talked about yesterday, Chase was a young jock. He was 6 years old when he actually completed and won a kids triathlon in Mansfield, CT. He was so inspired from watching the Olympics last summer, seeing his heroes Michael Phelps and Ryan Lochte do so well, that he went out and decided to learn how to swim and do it competitively. So with a little bit of help, he became a swimmer as well. His parents and surviving two older sisters, with a lot of his friends and family, ran together in honor of Chase's love for sports in a Sandy Hook 5K run that attracted thousands of people to the streets of Hartford.

Chase Kowalski could have done a lot of things. He clearly had this drive and initiative you don't find in a lot of kids who are only 7 years old. We will never really know who Chase was going to grow up to be, but he was a pretty remarkable young boy.

Jesse Lewis is here on this poster. His father, Neil Heslin, is here this week arguing and pleading for us to do something.

Jesse was a pretty amazing kid in his own right. He was 6 years old. The evening before the tragedy, he and his father had been out shopping for Christmas presents for his friends and family. One of the gifts they were going out to get was for his teacher Vicki Soto, who was killed the next morning along with him. Jesse was spending his own money on all these presents. He had \$37 to spend, which he had earned by helping his father with a variety of odd jobs.

That was Jesse. He wanted to do nice things for people, but he wanted to earn the right to do it, so it wasn't the first time he had gone out and basically earned the money at 6 years old in order to buy things. But he was still a kid. He grew up on a farm, so he loved horses and dogs and chicks, and he liked to go out and fish and play soccer. His dad was always outside working on projects, and he always wanted to be with his dad Neil.

He was a pretty amazing kid with a lot of initiative and drive for a 6-year-old. We will never really know who he was going to grow up to be either.

As I have talked about on this floor over the last 2 days, although so much of the attention is on those 20 kids, the reality is that 3,300 people have died since Newtown. That is where our focus should be as well, on people such as Brian Herrera, 16 years old, a straight-A student at Miami Jackson Senior High School. Three days before Christmas of last year, only about a week after the Newtown shootings, Brian was riding his bike to his best friend's house. He was doing exactly what he should have done—going to a friend's house to work on a school project—and he was gunned down in broad daylight in the middle of the pavement. He was still carrying his red backpack—a story we heard earlier today about someone else. This was a totally random shooting. I am not sure if this has

been solved at this point, but at the time the police had absolutely no idea why this happened. But there are so many guns out on the streets today—many of them illegal guns because we don't have a gun trafficking law and we don't have a good background checks law—that these things happen.

Jeremy Lee Khaoone, 25 years old, was shot in California about 1 month ago. He was one of five brothers. His father had just lost his wife. He was a native of Stockton, CA, an ironworker. He was always cheerful and smiling. Jeremy was killed by gun violence, and he left behind a 3-year-old son in February of this year.

Every single day 30 people in this country die from gun violence. You can't even see the differentiation between the little figurines on this chart because it happens so often. So I have been coming down to the floor not to hold time but just to remind my colleagues of whom we are really talking and the fact that what we are proposing to do next week really will make a difference.

If we want to get all these illegal guns off the street, then we can't just accept the status quo. We have to do something about it. It is ridiculous that we don't have a Federal law that bans gun trafficking. It is not OK that perhaps 4 out of every 10 guns in this country are sold without background checks. A person shouldn't be able to walk into a school or a movie theater or a church with a 100-round drum of ammunition. There is no reason for it.

We are not going to wipe gun violence off the face of this Earth, but we have to remember these victims. We have to remember the Jeremies, we have to remember the Jesses, we have to remember the Brians and the Charlottes and the Madeleines and all of these people who have lost their lives. We can't bring them back, but we can certainly make sure that 3 or 4 months from now this chart is a little bit smaller. We have the ability to do that.

I will be back next week with other stories of victims—from Connecticut, to Colorado, to Tucson, to New York City, to Chicago, to Miami—so that as we move into maybe the most critical week on the floor of this body with respect to the debate on gun violence in decades, we are really sure about whom we are talking about and the difference we can make.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). The Senator from Nebraska.

#### THE BUDGET

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, I rise today to speak on the budget proposal released at long last yesterday by President Obama. Tardy though this budget may be, and despite our differences in opinion, I welcome the President's ideas to begin addressing our Nation's fiscal crisis and runaway spending. Unfortunately, though, I am disappointed that this budget amounts to more taxes, more spending, and more debt. The President's budget calls

for \$1.1 trillion more in taxes, on top of the \$660 billion in tax hikes the President already demanded and won as part of the fiscal cliff deal enacted at the beginning of the year, before I arrived in Washington. That is a grand total of \$1.8 trillion in tax hikes—before we add in another trillion dollar tax from ObamaCare. Yet, despite all of this new so-called “revenue,” the President's budget would never balance. No amount of taxes will ever begin to address our Nation's \$17 trillion debt.

But taxes aren't the only problem with the President's budget. There is also a trillion dollars in new spending. We tried that in 2009. It didn't work then and it won't work now. To spend more, we have to borrow more. The President's budget would add \$8.2 trillion in new debt over the next 10 years.

Of particular concern to farmers, ranchers, and small businesses in Nebraska is a proposed hike in the death tax. Under the fiscal cliff deal reached at the beginning of this year, the death tax was set at 40 percent, with an exemption per estate of \$5 million, indexed for inflation. This is already an increase from 2011 and 2012, when the death tax rate was 35 percent. The President's budget, however, would hike the rate further, to 45 percent, while also diminishing the exemption per estate to \$3.5 million.

This disregards the bipartisan will of Congress. The Senate has repeatedly supported a lower death tax rate and higher exemption. Just 3 weeks ago, 80 senators—myself included—supported an amendment seeking to repeal, or at least reduce, the death tax. Instead, the President's death tax proposal would result in a \$72 billion tax hike. This would be particularly harmful to family farmers and ranchers in my State of Nebraska and across our Nation. On average, more than 80 percent of the value of a family-owned farm or ranch is derived from land, buildings, and equipment. Following the death of a loved one, families often must sell part or even all of their land and property to pay the death tax bill. Yet these are illiquid assets which rarely receive their assessed value on the open market, leaving families to take cents on the dollar in order for them to keep that farm or ranch.

Each day, farmers and ranchers across Nebraska and the United States rise well before dawn only to retire well after dark. After building a successful enterprise, family farmers and ranchers should be able to pass along the fruits of their labor to their children. Instead, the President's budget proposal would reward this lifetime of hard work with a higher tax bill.

I will proudly cosponsor legislation to be introduced soon by Senator JOHN THUNE to permanently repeal the death tax. Absent a full repeal, I will continue fighting to ensure that family farmers, ranchers, and other small businesses escape as much of the brunt of the death tax as possible. This is not to say that I disagree with every aspect

of the President's budget. Medicare and Social Security are both on the path to insolvency. I appreciate that the President sees this unsustainable path and has offered concrete proposals to reform these programs.

Without action, seniors and other beneficiaries will see steep cuts in benefits from Medicare by 2024 and Social Security by 2033. While these cuts will not come overnight, neither will the solutions we need to keep the promises we have made to our seniors and those nearing retirement.

This is the first step in what will be—and quite frankly needs to be—a prolonged, well-reasoned debate. I look forward to working with the President in good faith to reform and save these critical programs. I also appreciate the President's desire for revenue-neutral corporate tax reform. The devil, of course, is in the details. I have great reservations that the President's proposal would basically redistribute tax preferences instead of doing more to bring down what is the highest corporate income tax rate in the world. And I believe that we should not merely do this on the corporate side but reform our entire tax code on a revenue-neutral basis in order to unleash the economic growth of our Nation.

There are areas where we can work together—and I am eager to do so. But higher taxes, higher spending, and higher debt are not the answer to the fiscal challenges our Nation faces.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I join my other colleagues in thanking the Senators who joined us in the vote earlier today. My profound thanks go to all who voted among the 68 to enable this debate to go forward, to provide and permit debate and votes in coming days, and to enable the families of Newtown to have a vote; to enable the victims of Tucson and Virginia Tech and Aurora and Oak Ridge to have a vote.

Voting is what we are sent here to do. The American people hold us accountable when we have votes. Votes enable us to be held accountable and those votes will take place. The vote today is exciting and encouraging and energizing, but it is only a first step. The critical test and profoundly significant steps will be next week when we vote on the bipartisan compromise that our colleagues have fashioned, that Senators MANCHIN and TOOMEY have together forged on national criminal background checks.

That is not necessarily as strong as many of us might have preferred. That is not a final or ultimate result on this issue for all time. But it is a solid foundation and a path forward to enable more bipartisan compromise, more momentum and impetus.

The brave families from Newtown who were part of this discussion this week deserve our thanks as well. They turned the tide. They faced our colleagues in meetings, visit after visit,

conversation after conversation—painful, demanding, grief-stricken in recalling those hours after that horrific, unspeakable tragedy. As one who arrived there within hours of the shooting, I saw, firsthand, their unimaginable pain and grief as they came out of the Sandy Hook firehouse after learning for the first time that their babies would not return; loved ones, teachers, educators perishing while trying to save their children in their care.

Those families came to Washington to tell their stories and advocate for change so that others would be spared that same experience, so that others would be spared the same fate as the 3,300 who have died since Newtown and the horror they and their families experienced.

Just 4 months ago the conventional wisdom was that gun violence legislation would never go anywhere in the Congress. In fact, gun violence was politically untouchable. Just days ago, 60 votes was thought to be unreachable as a goal. The fact is the political landscape is changing seismically as we speak. As we deliberate, minds are changing. Voices are piercing that conventional wisdom. The courage and compassion of the Newtown families have disproved and completely defeated the pundits, the conventional wisdom, the prognosticators who said it could not be done.

The world watched that tragedy on December 14 at Newtown. I said on that evening at the vigil at St. Rose of Lima Church: The world is watching Newtown.

Indeed, the world watched Newtown, and today the world watched the Senate as it took this historic, and for many of our colleagues a courageous, brave step.

Today we kept faith with those families and the victims of that tragedy in a first step to finally do something about gun violence. Now we must continue working, taking nothing for granted, avoiding complacency and overconfidence because every step is uphill when it comes to gun violence.

I thank particularly two of my colleagues, JOE MANCHIN and PAT TOOMEY, because they stepped forward from States that may not be as receptive to what they have done as others, but they deserve the thanks and gratitude of their States in their statesmanship in supporting and forging this compromise.

I will continue to support and work for a truly universal background check system, but this bipartisan compromise represents significant progress. It is a vast improvement over current law. It will make sure that a lot fewer criminals get their hands on guns. It will make our streets and schools safer.

On the morning of December 14, I—along with Senator MURPHY—pledged to do everything I could to make sure more parents will not have to bury their children because of preventable gun violence. Expanded background

checks are part of that pledge, and we are helping to fulfill it by supporting it. This is only part of a bigger and more comprehensive solution to this problem, but this compromise is a good starting point for next week's debate on gun violence.

We have talked a lot about Newtown and the victims who have evoked our most powerful grief, breaking our hearts, and evoking memories of our own children at that age. As I said, I went to Newtown as a public official, but what I saw was through the eyes of a parent. Other victims of loved ones evoke the same memories.

Today, I wish to evoke the memory of another tragedy that many of us in Connecticut remember well. It happened at Hartford Distributors, which is just outside Hartford.

On a beautiful morning, August 2, 2010—and a lot of what I am going to summarize comes from this great newspaper account which appeared in the Hartford Courant shortly thereafter.

As the Courant reported:

In three minutes on that bright summer morning, Thornton executed eight men, shooting them all from behind and laughing at one point as he chased down a wounded victim.

Thornton went into a kitchenette near the office, saying that he wanted a drink of water. He pulled a pistol from his lunch pail and shot operations director Louis Felder. Hollander said he heard Felder yell: "Omar, you can't!" followed by loud bangs.

Hollander was hit by one of the bullets that passed through Felder. As he crawled into his father's office—

Hartford Distributors is owned by the Hollander family.

Hollander heard Cirigliano yell—"Omar, no! Omar, no!" Thornton shot Cirigliano twice, once in the back of the head and once in the forehead.

He systematically executed another six people after those two, and then he killed himself.

The victims that day were men who came to work every day and had families. They came to work expecting to come home at the end of the day. Their families expected them to come home. They were men who had worked in that place for many years by dint of their sweat and backbreaking labor. They had come to a place in their lives where they could enjoy it. They had enough financial security that they expected to enjoy it for some time. That day the killer deprived them of their future and their families' future as well.

Gun violence affects all of us in different ways. I have visited the memorial that was established for the brave men who died that day at Hartford Distributors. It is a quiet, peaceful place that is exquisitely and beautifully done. It evokes the memories of men who died while they were on the job because of a deranged individual who was, in fact, about to be fired.

Connecticut's experience with this kind of death extends to its own facility. The State lottery experienced a similar horrific and brutal slaying. The

scene played out in seconds, which seemed to take an eternity, on a Friday morning.

It was a routine morning for dozens of State lottery office workers, and it turned into a nightmare of blood, fear, and betrayal. The shooter was named Matthew Beck, and he summarily executed men and women there that day. Connecticut remembers those State employees who provided public service day in and day out and were killed while they were at work. Again, they were working men and women who wanted nothing more than to go home safely that night.

My colleague, CHRIS MURPHY, has recounted many stories. Many of the stories were about children. All of them had their future ahead of them. Their future ended brutally and horrifically because of gun violence.

We have taken a step today—a first step—hopefully followed by more steps next week.

I wish to end by thanking Members of this Chamber for giving us the opportunity to debate and vote and say to the American people we are willing to be held accountable.

The majority of American people want commonsense and sensible measures to end the violence on the streets, in our neighborhoods, and in our place of work, such as Hartford Distributors and the State lottery. We want to make sure the hard-working men and women who go to their jobs, play by the rules, and expect fairness have the opportunity to go home that night.

I thank this Chamber and the Members who voted today, and I hope those Members will join us in the future so we can make sure fewer victims perish as a result of this horrific epidemic in our country, gun violence.

Thank you.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MODIFYING THE REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE STOCK ACT

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. 716, introduced earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 716) to modify the requirements under the STOCK Act regarding online access to certain financial disclosure statements and related forms.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. COONS. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read three times and