

printed materials. We look forward to participating in the program as it continues to grow.

DLA PIPER

Financial donation.

DYSLEXIA TUTORING PROGRAM

The mission of The Dyslexia Tutoring Program is to provide free screening and remedial tutoring for low-income adults and children throughout Maryland with dyslexia and other language based learning differences. Volunteers take a free 20-hr training course in preparation for tutoring. The program works to achieve the following: (1) Train teachers in Orton-Gillingham, a proven method of teaching reading, writing and spelling; (2) Tutor students that are accepted into our program by providing free tutoring; (3) Provide In-Service Workshops to school staff to help identify potential students.

ENOCH PRATT FREE LIBRARY

The Enoch Pratt Free Library will be a major partner in the library project. Each elementary school library will include an "Enoch Pratt Parent Corner" with a computer connecting parents to the Enoch Pratt system. In addition, each library will have a permanent loan collection on parenting books and other appropriate adult literature. Enoch Pratt will also provide four Family Reading Circle programs during the school year. This six-week program brings a library professional to the school, with high-quality books and dinner for the group. Enoch Pratt will also provide limited funding for students to take public transportation from their homes or from school to the closest Pratt Library. Finally, Enoch Pratt Free Library will host students from each school for field trips to the central library each year. The estimated value of this partnership is \$20,000 per library, or \$80,000 for the first four libraries.

FUND FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

The Fund for Educational Excellence has worked side by side with Baltimore City Public Schools for over 25 years securing the financial, human, and knowledge resources necessary to support policy and practice resulting in increased student achievement for Baltimore City Public School students. On this project the Fund serves as the fiscal agent working as an intermediary between City Schools and the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation to ensure all grant dollars are allocated to the project appropriately.

HEART OF AMERICA FOUNDATION

HOA will coordinate the purchasing, sorting, cataloging and delivery of brand new library books for each school. In addition, to address the fact that as many as 61 percent of children from low income families do not have any books in the home, HOA will provide three books per student for his or her home library. This year, HOA will deliver more than 9,800 library books in total and over 4,800 take home books for the students for this project.

INCITE CREATIVE

The firm's focus group facilitation with students and their parents helped guide their design and development of the Library Project's logo and overall identity.

JRS ARCHITECTS, INC

JRS Architects, Inc., as a consultant to Baltimore City Public Schools, will work closely with Kirk Designs to incorporate the elements of the concept plan into the architectural plans, including coordination of proposed lighting and technology with electrical and data plans, incorporation of floor, wall and window treatments into the construction documents. JRS Architects will

also help coordinate the efforts of other partners donating technology and equipment to ensure smooth coordination into the finished library. JRS Architects, Inc. will be donating the time required to coordinate the efforts of the partners in the three QZAB-funded projects.

KIRK DESIGNS

Kirk Designs Inc. will design and detail all aspects of the library pertaining to selections for, but not limited to, lighting, flooring, wall and window treatments as well as all furnishings while creating a usable and exciting space for grades Pre-K through Eight. Kirk Designs will interface with vendors as well as provide and enforce a schedule for completion. Kirk Designs will be donating a substantial design cost for each project, approximately \$15,000 per library.

KNOTT MECHANICAL

Knott Mechanical will provide for modifications to the libraries' existing air distribution systems including installation of new diffusers and low-pressure ductwork to conform with the new designs. Knott Mechanical is one of the Baltimore metropolitan area's premier commercial HVAC and plumbing service providers, serving more than 150 clients including Johns Hopkins and Comcast.

MARYLAND FOOD BANK

Maryland Food Bank is happy to investigate the implementation of their school pantry program in each of these school locations and can also help with summer feeding programs when school is out of session.

PARKS AND PEOPLE FOUNDATION

Parks & People will consider each renovated library as a potential site for after school and summer programming. Site assessments for the first six libraries could amount to as much as \$2,000 per site, or a total of \$12,000. For libraries that are determined to be a fit for an after school or summer program, services provided would range from \$5,000-\$80,000 per site. The organization is also involved in green initiatives at each school including asphalt removal and the creation of reading gardens.

RAISING A READER

Raising A Reader is partnering with the Weinberg Foundation to provide library project schools with an opportunity to implement the program in kindergarten classrooms. The partnership covers the cost of training, materials and the financial support needed to implement Raising A Reader for many of our youngest learners and their families.

STATE OF MARYLAND/MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The State of Maryland, through The Maryland State Department of Education will provide focused technical assistance by working with the Manager for Library Media Services for the Baltimore City Public Schools to support the library/media specialists in the Weinberg Library Project schools with the incorporation of digital resources, the utilization of the MDK12 Digital Library, assistance with professional development needs, and with collection development. MSDE staff will also facilitate linkages with public libraries to promote professional development opportunities and broaden access to materials. During the transition to the new Maryland State Common Core Curriculum, MSDE staff will commit time and energy to supporting the work of the library/media center specialists in providing assistance to teachers who are engaged in integrating primary resources into their lessons.

UNITED WAY OF CENTRAL MARYLAND

As part of United Way Worldwide's effort to cut the high school dropout rate in half,

United Way of Central Maryland has joined their call to help recruit one million readers, tutors and mentors and will launch a new volunteer program: Read, Learn, Succeed this fall. We look forward to recruiting members of the community to read to young children to fill in some of the volunteer gaps that exist in many local programs.

VPC, INC.

Handles all of the production and multimedia content creation for Library Project events.

WELLS FARGO

Wells Fargo is proud to further its commitment to Baltimore City students by serving as the Baltimore Elementary and Middle School Library Project's Financial Literacy Partner. Their commitment will include a \$20,000 donation to fund library technology thereby providing access to a world of information including www.handsonbanking.com, the online portal to its free financial literacy program. The company also commits its most valued resource, the time and talent of local Wells Fargo team members. Local team members will provide financial literacy to members of the Weinberg Library communities, including teachers, students and their families. Additionally, through Wells Fargo's Reading First program, team members will read aloud to Pre-K through 1st grade classes to support early childhood literacy and will then donate those books to the library.

Mr. CARDIN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

COMMEMORATING VIRGINIA TECH SHOOTING

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise to perform a solemn duty today, which is to commemorate the shooting at Virginia Tech of 32 students and faculty members who were killed 6 years ago today and many others who were injured:

Ross Alameddine, Jamie Bishop, Brian Bluhm, Ryan Clark, Austin Michelle Cloyd, Jocelyne Couture-Nowak, Daniel Alejandro Perez Cueva, Kevin Granata, Matthew Gwaltney, Caitlin Hammaren, Jeremy Herbstritt, Rachael Elizabeth Hill, Emily Hilscher, Jarrett Lane, Matthew La Porte, Henry Lee, Liviu Librescu, G.V. Loganathan, Partahi Mamora Halomoan Lumbantoruan, Lauren McCain, Daniel O'Neil, Juan Ramon Ortiz-Ortiz, Minal Panchal, Erin Peterson, Michael Pohle, Julia Pryde, Mary Karen Read, Reema Samaha, Waleed Mohammed Shaalan, Leslie Sherman, Maxine Turner, and Nichole White.

I read those names to honor those who were killed and had their lives snuffed out on April 16, 2007. I acknowledge also that many students and faculty members were injured. We have with us today both family members of those who are deceased and even some students who were injured. I also honor all in the Hokie, the Virginia Tech community that is very close, that still suffers the wounds from this horrible shooting.

In the aftermath of the shooting at Virginia Tech 6 years ago today, we learned a lot. We learned that we have

to make fixes to the mental health system: that school security and safety is incredibly important, that alert systems that can notify people when bad things happen are incredibly important. We also learned a tragic but important lesson; that is, background record checks make us safer. The young, troubled individual with no criminal record who committed those horrible crimes had a long history of mental illness. He had been adjudicated mentally ill and dangerous. Because of that adjudication, he was not supposed to be able to own or purchase weapons, but a flaw in the background record check system kept that record from being entered into the national database. So when he decided and went to purchase the weapons he used in committing this horrible homicide, he was allowed to purchase them.

In the immediate aftermath of the shooting, with the strong support of the Virginia Tech families, we fixed that problem in the background record check. As Governor, I worked with my Republican attorney general, the current Governor of Virginia, Bob McDonnell. We fixed the background record check system that facilitated this gruesome crime. Background records checks make us safer. The better the system, the safer we are.

I later went to my legislature and tried to get them to fix the background record check in another way—by closing the gun show loophole, to require records checks at gun shows. I failed in that task. I not only could not convince my legislature to do it, I could not even convince a single committee to report a bill out to the floor.

That is why I am so glad we are debating on the floor meaningful fixes to gun violence, including a fix to our background record check system when it comes to gun shows or online purchases. I look forward to the debate, and I look forward to supporting the proposals that have been advanced by Senators MANCHIN and TOOMEY.

I read the names, the 32 names of those who were killed. As I conclude, I wish to take a couple of minutes to tell the story of one of the individuals.

I read the name of Liviu Librescu, who was a professor at Virginia Tech, a professor of engineering. He was teaching a course in Norris Hall on the day of this horrible tragedy, and as shots rang out, he heard the shots. He went to the door, and he barricaded the door with his own body, and on the second floor of Norris Hall, he told his students to get out of the window and get to the ground and get to safety. He stood there against the door as Seung-Hui Cho, the shooter, fired repeated rounds through the door, striking his body many times and eventually killing him. But not until the last shot when he was killed did he stop saying to the students: Hurry. You have time. You can get out of the window. And all but one of Liviu Librescu's students were able to get out of the window. One student, Minal Panchal, ended up being

killed because he bravely waited for the other students to go out the window first.

What heroism and bravery. Yet the Liviu Librescu story is even more powerful than that because Liviu Librescu, the professor, was 76 years old—long past retirement age. He had continued to teach because he loved teaching.

He was born in 1930 in Romania. When the Romanian Government became allied with Nazi Germany in 1940, because he was Jewish and his family was Jewish, he was subjected to the persecution Jews in Romania were subjected to, his family was sent into forced labor camps, and Liviu Librescu lived in a crowded ghetto in a Romanian city, being persecuted, but he came through the Holocaust as a survivor. Many Jews, after the war, left Romania because of the persecution of Jews, but it was Liviu Librescu's home, and he stayed. He went to a university, and he became a world-renowned aerospace engineer, and he continued to teach.

But now Romania fell under the influence, as a puppet state, of the Soviet Union. He would not pledge allegiance to the Communist Party. He would not relinquish his tie to his Judaic faith. Because of that, he began to be subjected to persecution for a second time, to be persecuted because of his religion, to be denied the ability to publish articles or travel to academic conferences. Eventually, he lost his job at the university because of his Judaism and because he was unwilling to take the oath of allegiance to the Communist Party.

He was persona non grata in his home country of Romania. However, people in the outside world who knew of his scholarship never let go, and they continued to speak on Liviu Librescu's behalf. He was eventually allowed, in 1977, to emigrate to Israel.

He lived in Israel for 8 years and received a 1-year teaching fellowship at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA. He came for 1 year and never left. He taught as a popular teacher and researcher in Blacksburg, VA, from 1985 until the day he was killed in 2007.

This horrible day, April 16, 2007, started as a normal Monday for virtually everyone who ended up sharing the tragic fate. It was not a normal day. It did not start as a normal day for Liviu Librescu. Liviu Librescu, as a proud Jew, observed that day, from sundown on the 15th of April, the evening before, until sundown on the 16th of April, as Yom HaShoah, Holocaust and Heroism Memorial Day.

Yom HaShoah, in the Jewish religion since 1953, has been a day worldwide where Jews and their allies remember the Holocaust, perpetrators, victims, and the bystanders—the bystanders who wouldn't do anything to stop the atrocity.

They also remember the heroism of those who fought against the Holocaust.

As Professor Librescu went to his class on this day, while it was a normal

Monday for most, I know he walked into his class thinking about Yom HaShoah, perpetrators, victims, bystanders, and heroes. He made a decision, in the split second he heard shots being fired, to be a hero and to save others' lives.

He survived the Holocaust, perpetrated by Nazi Germany, and anti-Semitism in Romania. He survived the persecution perpetrated in his country by the Soviet Union. However, Liviu Librescu could not survive the epidemic of gun violence in this country, the country which he adopted and loved.

In conclusion, I would encourage all of us to take a minute, Senators, staff, pages, people in the gallery, members of the press, take a moment and ask yourselves would you do what Liviu Librescu did. Would you put your body against a door, allow yourself to be shot, and encourage others to be safe? Would you do that? Would we do this?

As I thought about this question, being honest, I would say I hope I would do that. I pray if it comes to that I would act to protect others ahead of myself.

If I am honest with myself, what I have to say is I don't know whether I would do that. I don't know whether I would be a hero like Liviu Librescu. I don't know if I would have the courage to do what Liviu Librescu did.

The good news for those of us who have the honor and blessing to serve in this Chamber is we do not need to put our body in front of bullets to keep people safe. We do not need to put our bodies in front of bullets to protect kids and protect students. All we need to do is have an infinitesimal portion of the courage Liviu Librescu had and cast votes. We need to cast votes on the floor of this body to keep our community safer and to keep our children safer.

I have heard it said this will be a hard vote. For 20 years there has not been a meaningful discussion of these issues on the floor of the Senate because interests are too powerful, the NRA is too powerful. It will be a vote which will be scored, and we need to worry about it. It will take courage. It does not take courage, to any degree, when we think about Liviu Librescu, who saved his students.

Last week I met the daughter of Mary Sherlach, who was the guidance counselor in Sandy Hook who ran to save her students and was killed. When we think about the courage and heroism shown by these individuals, what we are being asked to do on the floor of this body is the least we can do.

It is about heroism. We honor heroes such as Liviu Librescu. The people who put us in office expect us to have at least a small measure of courage, a small measure of heroism. We owe it to those students and others who were shot, killed, and wounded at Virginia Tech. We owe it to the people who were killed or wounded in Newtown. I would ask all my colleagues to reflect upon

the example of Professor Librescu and the heroism he showed as we debate what might be a controversial proposal this week.

Again, the blessing we have as Senators is that we do not have to interpose our bodies in the way of violence to make a difference and make people safer. It is my wish we do that as we debate and vote in the coming days.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, let me first say I also am on the floor because today is April 16, the sixth anniversary of the horrible shootings at the campus of Virginia Tech. I think every Virginian and every American—I can say Virginians at least—remember when we first received those news reports of the violence perpetrated by Seung-Hui Cho.

I say to my colleague and friend, the Senator from Virginia, in the 33 years we have known each other I have valued his friendship and appreciate his intellect, grace, and knowledge. There was never a moment I was prouder of then-Governor TIM Kaine than those moments after the tragedy.

I don't know if in his comments he noted he had been on a trade mission in Asia when these incidents happened. He barely had landed when he turned around—he and his wife Anne—boarded a plane and came back with virtually no rest. As a Governor you bear these responsibilities in remarkable ways when Virginians are hurt, and in those days he spoke for all of us.

The words he said at the Virginia Tech campus in the ceremony afterward brought together the community and brought together our Commonwealth. In many ways he spoke for our whole Nation, as he has so eloquently spoken this morning. I thank him for what he did as a Virginian in those days afterward and thank him for the eloquent comments he made this morning.

In the aftermath of the tragedy at Virginia Tech, under the leadership of Governor Kaine, Virginia acted. We were within the legislature able to close the legal loophole which allowed Cho, who had been adjudicated mentally unsound, we closed the loophole so he could no longer—or someone who had been adjudicated in such a way—be able to purchase firearms. In the aftermath of the tragedy, then-Governor Kaine appointed a nationally respected commission of experts to recognize what happened and recognize ways we might make all our colleges and universities safer.

This leads me to some of my comments this morning. We are about to take on a debate around how we keep America and Americans safer in a way that also respects our constitutional amendment of the right to keep and bear arms.

An underlying amendment of the bill we are about to debate has at least one part of the legislation which is relatively noncontroversial, a piece of

legislation I have been working on for some time. I know Senator Kaine has supported this as well. The issue is to look at campus safety. It has been one of the top priorities of those victims of the Virginia Tech massacre.

Those families who have spoken with me repeatedly, and with Senator Kaine as well, said let's at least make sure, if a tragic event takes place on a college campus somewhere in America, there are ways we can learn from these tragedies.

So the CAMPUS Safety Act, which is embedded in this legislation, will bring together research and resources on campus safety to strengthen training and improve collaboration. Today, campus public safety officers are the only first responders who don't have access to Federal support to assist in sharing the best practices, relevant research, and training opportunities.

The CAMPUS Safety Act, which received bipartisan support in the committee markup, seeks to address this by consolidating scattered Federal efforts into a national center for campus public safety housed within the Department of Justice. This Center would not only provide a one-stop repository of relevant research but also examples of best practices. It would have an ability to issue grants to colleges, universities, and nonprofit organizations to strengthen efforts to help make our campus community safer.

This kind of planning and training will help prevent future violence on our campuses and will help improve responses in the event of another horrific outbreak of violence on our campus or other university. I am pleased our bipartisan CAMPUS Safety Act is included in the discussions we are having in this body in the coming days and weeks.

I wish to take a moment to speak about a specific aspect of this debate which will, I imagine, be coming up for a vote in the next few days. I stand before my colleagues to say a few words in support of the Manchin-Toomey amendment we will most likely vote on this week. Both Senators Manchin and Toomey have shown courage in working together on what Senator Kaine said is a difficult issue. I support the bipartisan compromise on background checks they proposed.

Their amendment will strengthen our background check system, close the gun show loophole, and prohibit the commercial sale of guns to those who are seriously mentally ill or have a criminal record. Let me also say their amendment also contains appropriate exemptions so responsible gun owners will still be allowed to make direct transactions between family and friends to ensure a father or grandfather could pass that shotgun along to their son or daughter.

Our shared goal is to ensure we keep guns out of the hands of the wrong people while respecting the basic constitutional right to bear arms. I have been disappointed by some who said some-

how this amendment will infringe upon this right. I couldn't disagree more. This has been a common refrain on both sides of the aisle since we started this conversation in December after the tragic events in Newtown.

If we are serious about achieving this goal, the Manchin-Toomey amendment achieves a thoughtful, effective, and balanced approach to achieving our background check system. It strengthens the instant check system of all States to put their information into the NICS, the National Instant Background Check System. One of the outgrowths we saw after the horrible tragedy at Virginia Tech was so many States, while they may have collected this information, didn't even put it into the national database.

One other amendment Senator Toomey put forward would establish a national commission on mass violence to study all the causes of mass violence in our country, including school safety, mental health, issues about firearms, and also issues around some of the images all of us and our children are exposed to in television and film.

This amendment, combined with provisions to prevent gun trafficking and our proposal to improve campus safety, represents a reasonable path forward. In our efforts to reduce violence—as Senator Kaine has so eloquently stated—we are trying to ensure we don't have to create the kinds of heroes which took place 6 years ago on the campus of Virginia Tech.

Let me also add, as I am sure all my colleagues will express, our hearts go out to the families of the victims of the most recent tragedy which took place in Boston. I think I can relate, as a former resident of Boston—and I know Senator Kaine, former Governor Kaine, then-law student TIM Kaine—he and I first met at a law school in Boston—remembering Patriots' Day in Boston, when even if you were not going to run in the marathon, the kind of joy that swept through Boston on Patriots' Day. We all know Boston will be back. We all saw those images yesterday of the horrific tragedy.

I talked to a friend whose wife had literally finished the race 4 minutes before the bombing took place. If she had finished 4 minutes later, he or his daughter or his wife might have been one of the victims of that tragedy. I know, as a father, I called my daughters last night to try to enforce how much I love them, how valuable life is, and how at any moment, whether in a classroom in Virginia Tech or running the Boston Marathon, life can be snuffed out.

I agree with Senator Kaine that in the coming days and weeks, as we have this debate, we are not going to be asked to make acts of courage; we are simply going to be asked to do our job. I believe the Manchin-Toomey amendment and the CAMPUS Safety Act are part of our role and responsibility in doing our job, and I hope we will be able to act on that matter.

With that, I yield the floor.
The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). The Senator from Texas.

BOSTON MARATHON BOMBINGS

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, yesterday afternoon we were reminded that America faces determined enemies willing to engage in barbaric acts against innocent civilians—men, women, and children. On Patriots' Day—a day that has always been a celebration of American heritage and American freedom—terrorist bombings took the lives of at least three people standing near the finish line of the Boston Marathon, including an 8-year-old boy. His name was Martin Richard. He was watching runners complete the race alongside his family. His mother and his sister also sustained injuries, along with more than 150 other people.

We still don't know who is responsible for this terrible atrocity, but we do know the people of Boston responded to this attack with courage and compassion. As the smoke rose, the American people saw their fellow citizens running toward—not away but toward—the scene of the blast. From the police officers and the first responders who secured the bomb site and loaded the injured into ambulances to the marathon participants who literally ran to hospitals to donate blood, to the doctors and other medical professionals who performed emergency lifesaving treatments on the victims, to the Boston area residents who opened their homes to those who had been left stranded, this attack brought out the very best in our country.

In fact, in the immediate aftermath of the bombing, so many people rushed to donate blood, the Red Cross literally had to turn them away. Dr. Richard Wolfe, the head of the emergency medicine department at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, called it “the smoothest sort of handling of mass casualty I've ever seen in my career”—something I hope none of us have to see again.

This Chamber has spent the last 4 months, and even years before that, debating issues such as taxes, spending, and health care. But the No. 1 responsibility of the Federal Government is to keep the American people safe and secure. Our response to this attack must be firm and unequivocal. We must send a clear message that we will never compromise our values or our freedom in the face of terrorist violence. We must stay on the offensive against the enemies of civilization and remain vigilant in our day-to-day lives. The victims of Boston deserve nothing less.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). The Senator from Iowa.

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

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, morning business is closed.

SAFE COMMUNITIES, SAFE SCHOOLS ACT OF 2013

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 649, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 649) to ensure that all individuals who should be prohibited from buying a firearm are listed in the national instant criminal background check system and require a background check for every firearm sale, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Manchin amendment No. 715, to protect Second Amendment rights, ensure that all individuals who should be prohibited from buying a firearm are listed in the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, and provide a responsible and consistent background check process.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 12:30 p.m. will be for debate only.

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am glad we are proceeding on this very important legislation. The American people might be wondering why the Senate has not been voting on any amendments to the pending gun legislation.

The Senate voted on Thursday to proceed to the bill. This followed calls that the Senate should debate the bill, and that is why I said I am glad we are getting to it. There has been very little debate. The President has said various proposals deserve a vote. We, on this side of the aisle, don't intend to stand in the way of proceeding on those votes, particularly on the amendments. So I hope we are able to vote very soon.

Last week Senator MANCHIN and Senator TOOMEY unveiled an amendment on background checks. The media hailed the agreement as a way to pass gun control. The majority announced that the Manchin-Toomey amendment would be the first one we vote on. Since we are just starting the debate now, obviously we have not voted on the amendment.

We have not voted because despite claims from the other side, background checks are not and never have been the sweet spot of the gun control debate. We have not voted on it because supporters don't have the votes to pass it—at least at this point that is the way it appears to me—and I think they know it.

They don't have the votes even though published reports indicate that Vice President BIDEN, the President of the Senate, has been calling Senators and asking them to support the

Manchin-Toomey bill. They must not be telling him what he wants to hear. They don't have the votes for background checks even though the Vice President has reportedly stated that the opposition to the proposal comes only from the “black helicopter” crowd.

Well, it doesn't come from that point.

The Manchin-Toomey amendment would impose new obligations on law-abiding gun owners. It would do so even though expanding gun background checks would have done nothing to stop Newtown or other mass killings. It would do so even though expanding background checks would do nothing to prevent these killings in the future.

I often quote the Deputy Director of the National Institute of Justice, who recently wrote that background checks could work only if they were universal and were accompanied by gun registration. Of course, most Members of the Senate oppose gun registration. They know what has happened historically with gun registration. In other countries it has led to gun confiscation, and Members of the Senate—but more importantly, lots of people appearing at our town meetings—fear that could happen and don't want to go down that road.

Supporters of the background check amendment claim that it strengthens the rights of gun owners; but, in fact, it does not. The fact is the opposite is true. Opposition to the amendment does not come from the fringe elements of society. In fact, one of the reasons the Senate has not voted on the amendment is the widespread opposition to the amendment from many quarters. If only fringe elements had problems with it, we would be voting on this amendment. So keep watching. If we do not vote on the Manchin-Toomey amendment, it means the proponents of that idea know they don't have the votes to pass it. If we turn to assault weapons or magazines, then it is clear to all that the majority knows it is far from the number of votes they need. I think people are going to be waiting while they try to pick up the votes that will probably never be there.

Meanwhile, on this side of the aisle, our caucus hopes to have their amendments considered soon and to vote on those amendments. Our amendments, unlike the Manchin-Toomey amendment, will actually strengthen the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding gun owners and help thwart gun violence by criminals. In fact, there are reports that the other side of the aisle wants to block one of our amendments which would do exactly that.

So that is the situation. Maybe there are leaders around here who would dispute me, but that is the way I see it. The majority doesn't have the votes to pass their amendment, so we are not voting. The majority wants to block Republican amendments that they fear would pass, so we are not voting on the Republican amendments either.