

RECESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that we recess until 2:15 p.m. for our caucuses.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:20 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

SAFE COMMUNITIES, SAFE SCHOOLS ACT OF 2013—Continued

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, my colleagues, the week is finally here when we come to the floor to have votes on a piece of legislation we have been waiting on for decades. This Chamber is finally talking about what we can do to stop the plague of gun violence which has rippled through every single corner of this country.

As I watched these mass shootings play out over the course of the last 10 years—whether it be in Colorado or Arizona or Virginia—we think to ourselves that this is just something we are watching. This is just something that has happened somewhere else to someone else. We never think it could happen to us.

I will never forget that day I was in Bridgeport, CT, and it was right before Christmas. We were getting ready to take a train so I could bring my two little boys, along with my wife, to look at the pageantry of New York City. That was the day I got the call that there had been a shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

I thought it must have been a mistake. I thought, well, to the extent there is something going on at Sandy Hook Elementary School—this quiet hamlet in western Connecticut—it must be some disgruntled employee who walked in and had a grudge.

What I learned over the next few minutes during the half-hour drive to Newtown made my blood freeze. I learned this was a mass shooting involving dozens of adults and kids. I realized it was now happening in my neighborhood, in my State, in my town.

Unfortunately—as I stood at the firehouse where the community gathered that day and all the parents stood waiting for their children to come back or not come back from that school—I realized I had way too many colleagues

I could call upon for advice on how, as an elected official, to deal with a tragedy of this magnitude. I could call my friends in Arizona, I could call my friends in Colorado, or I could call my new colleague, Governor Kaine, from Virginia. There were too many places to turn, and it happened to us in Connecticut in a place we never, ever thought would be subjected to gun violence. We are finally at the tipping point on a debate of what we can do. Through all of the back and forth this week and last week about whether we would have a vote on this floor or would we have to overcome a filibuster, could we come to a compromise on background checks, would we add provisions to ban high-capacity magazines, underneath it all are these victims. There have been thousands of victims. There were the little girls and boys in Newtown, but also 16-, 17-, 31-, and 68-year-olds from across the country who have been gunned down over the course of the last several decades without this body raising a finger to try to make things different. Well, it is time for those victims' stories to be told.

As I did last week, I will be on the floor this week so I can share the stories of victims of gun violence. I will tell stories of lives which were cut way too short because of guns, and, in part, because this body has not been serious enough to stand up and do something about it.

I want to start this afternoon's remarks by returning to the place where it all started for me, and that is Sandy Hook Elementary School. There are 26 stories to tell of the people who lost their lives at that school that day, and I think I have gotten to about 20 or 21 of them. I will talk about the last few stories. It is unbelievable.

I have not had a chance to tell the story of Anne Marie Murphy, even though I told the story of what she did that day on the floor at least once. I just shared her story with my Democratic colleagues.

Before that fatal day, Anne Marie Murphy was an amazing person. Anne Marie was a special education teacher, and she loved her work. She sought out working in the area of special education because she knew she had a talent, as so many of her students and the parents who worked with her found out. They knew she had a talent for reaching out and touching little boys' and little girls' lives.

In fact, it is not a coincidence that a number of the kids who were killed in Sandy Hook Elementary School that day were kids with autism because Sandy Hook was known as a school that had a talent for reaching out to kids on the autistic spectrum. And Anne Marie was part of that story. She was a special education teacher. She was a mother of four wonderful children: Kelly, Colleen, Paige, and Thomas. She grew up in Katonah, NY. She graduated from St. Mary's School there before attending JFK High

School in Somers, NY. Then she got her degree in Connecticut at a school that actually was in the process of educating one of the other teachers who was killed that day, Victoria Soto. Southern Connecticut State University is where she got her degree.

She was remembered by her friends and family as sweet, happy, outgoing, and caring, and all of those characteristics came into play that day. I shared this story with my colleagues last week and then behind closed doors today, but I will share it quickly again.

That day, Anne Marie Murphy had in her charge a little boy named Dylan Hockley. When the bullets started flying, Anne Marie took Dylan into her arms and did her best to comfort him and perhaps shield him. When the police came into that classroom, that is how they found Dylan and Anne Marie—in each other's arms. To the Hockleys, the fact that there was some small measure of love being expressed to Dylan in the last horrible moments gives them some small measure of peace. She died a hero doing what she did best.

Anne Marie had been doing this for awhile, but she had a lot of years to give. She was only 52 years old. She could have continued to change the lives of children in need, children with autism, for another 10-plus years. Just think of all the lives she could have affected. How many more Dylan Hockleys could she have found and nurtured and helped work through their autism? We will never get to know. She was killed that day.

Grace McDonnell's parents are amazing. They have been down here to Washington a number of times already. They have led a lot of the debate in our communities in Connecticut about what we do to change the issue of guns and gun violence. They do so because they lost their daughter Grace McDonnell that day.

Grace was 7 years old when she died. Grace had asked for a purple cake with a turquoise peace sign and polka dots when she turned 7. That is what she wanted, I guess, for her birthday, was that purple cake. She loved the color purple and she loved the color pink, as so many of these girls did, and her funeral, which I had the honor of attending, was just buried in pink.

Grace loved the beach. One could always find Grace McDonnell on the beach. She loved country music. Taylor Swift and Kenny Chesney were amongst her favorites. She played soccer. She participated in gymnastics. She had a dog, Puddin', that she absolutely adored.

She was a very kind, wonderful little girl, so her parents have tried to think of the ways, big and small, in which they can try to pass along the kindness their 7-year-old little girl Grace showed for the world. They have done that by trying to explain to this country who she is. They have done that by taking all the art she produced—Grace was a fantastic artist, and many of us

have pieces of original art that Grace McDonnell did hanging on our walls in our offices or at our homes. But the McDonnells do small things. Following her memorial service, they stopped at a local restaurant and they ordered a cupcake for every patron who came into the establishment that day—white cake, chocolate frosting, pink and white sprinkles—just to do a small little thing to spread Grace's love throughout this devastated community.

Coincidentally, it was after Grace's funeral that I received word that the NRA was going to oppose virtually everything we did. Up until that moment, I had hoped the NRA was going to be a partner with us. I remember walking out of Grace McDonnell's funeral—amongst the dozens of wakes and funerals I went to over those 2 weeks—and getting a copy of the NRA statement handed to me. It was that day that I understood we were in for a fight, one a lot of us who were in the midst of that grief didn't expect we were going to have. We thought Newtown was going to bring us all together. Unfortunately, for some, it has not.

Allison Wyatt died that day. Allison was 6 years old. Allison was an overwhelmingly kind girl.

All of these little boys and girls were kind because, frankly, that is what most little boys and girls are when they are 6 and 7 years old. They are wonderfully kind. This tragedy kills us inside because we know that 6- and 7-year-olds remind all of us about what we want to be.

Allison once gave her snack to a hungry stranger on a plane. She gave it away as a simple act of kindness. She had a passion for drawing. She wanted to be an artist when she grew up. She would cover the walls of her house with her drawings, turning every room in the Wyatts' house into her own little art studio. In fact, just before her death, she had drawn a picture for her teacher Victoria Soto, and she had written on that picture, "I love you, Love, Allie." Both Victoria Soto and her student Allison Wyatt died that day. Her daycare teacher said of Allison that "she would come and put her head down on your shoulder if she was upset. It would make her feel better. She was just such a sweet and caring girl."

Twenty-six teachers and students died that day in Sandy Hook, and we will remember every single one of them. Twenty-eight people died that day, and we have to remember that. As much anger and often hatred as we have for the shooter and as much confusion as we have about his mother and the questions we ask about why she would give him access to those kinds of weapons, knowing how troubled he was—28 people did die that day, 26 at the Sandy Hook Elementary School. But here is the thing. Every day more than that die in this country from gun violence. Every day, on average, 30 peo-

ple die from gun violence across this country.

I have had this chart up for the last week, and it is hard to read if the viewer is in the gallery or in this Chamber or watching from somewhere else because each one of these little figures represents someone who has been killed by guns since December 14, 2012. In the now almost 4 months since that day—I think it is over 4 months now—over 3,400 people have died from guns all across this country.

We, as a legislative body, over the past several decades, seem to have become immune to the everyday gun violence that happens. We are just sort of used to picking up our local paper and reading about another shooting, reading about another victim, such as those who have died in my State, in New Haven and Hartford and Bridgeport, on a pretty regular basis.

This debate has to be not just about what we can do to try to lessen the likelihood that anyone has to call me and ask for advice on how they should handle the latest mass shooting in their State or their district, but it also has to be an answer to the thousands of people who are losing their lives on the streets of America due to routine, everyday gun violence. That is what the compromise that is on the floor for debate right now will do.

Since we put into place our background checks law, there have been hundreds of thousands of people who have been legally prohibited from buying guns because they were felons or they had been convicted of domestic abuse or they were judged so mentally ill that they shouldn't own guns. Hundreds of thousands of people have walked into gun stores and have been prevented from buying guns because of our background check law. The problem is that only about 60 percent of gun sales go through those background checks, and 90 percent of Americans agree we should apply background checks to as many people as we can to make sure criminals don't have guns. If criminals didn't have guns, I can virtually guarantee my colleagues that this visual would be a little less stunning than it is today. It wouldn't erase these figurines. Background checks, if they were universal, wouldn't erase the scourge of violence across this country, but it would certainly lessen the impact of this chart.

So let's talk about some of the victims of urban gun violence—of gun violence in our communities that is a 1-day story in the paper, not the multiday episode a mass shooting may be.

We can talk about someone like Kwante Feliciano. Kwante was killed just about a month ago in Hartford, CT. The shooting occurred on March 25. Kwante was shot in the chest, and a companion, 30-year-old Kelly Cooper, was shot in the head. Both of them were pronounced dead at St. Francis Hospital.

Kwante was a product of the Hartford public school system, and he was try-

ing to do better for himself. There are a lot of kids who drop out of the Hartford public school system, but Kwante had figured out a way to graduate and was also trying to get himself employed in a tough economy. He was attending Lincoln Technical Institute, and he was studying to be an automotive technician at the time of his death. His obituary said that he was loved by everybody who came in contact with him and that what defined him to most of his friends and his family was his 100-watt smile.

Hartford is a tough place to grow up. There are a lot of kids who don't see a way out of their situation. But this young man did. He had gotten his high school diploma. He was trying to do something to make himself better by becoming an automotive technician, and he was shot dead in the chest just a few short weeks ago. Kelly, by the way, who was shot with him, leaves behind four children, four brothers, and one sister.

Kanasha Isaac was 16 years old. She was described by her friends as a social butterfly. She was full of energy and life. Her family was her center. Her uncle's home was always the place where her friends and her family congregated when they were there. Kanasha was the center of all of her family's life.

After exiting a local restaurant, Kanasha and her boyfriend got into their car. Another car pulled up beside them, blocked them as they were going into a parking space, and a man shot at their car. He shot Kanasha in the face. She died shortly thereafter at 16 years old. This was in Florida on February 24 of this year.

Kanasha was going to the local high school. She wasn't the first victim of gun violence in recent months. In December two high school classmates of hers, Coby Deleon and Natalia Trejo, were killed in a murder-suicide. Three students in this one local high school in Florida were killed in about a 2-month, 3-month period of time.

Christopher Walker was 19 years old, and he was shot on March 12 of this year in Milton, GA. It was an attempted robbery. He was a marketing student at Georgia Perimeter College, and he had just been accepted into Kennesaw State University for the upcoming fall semester. That is a big deal. He had been trying to do right for himself and his family. He had been studying marketing, and he had just gotten accepted into Kennesaw State University. He was excited about getting into that school. He was already working to pay for his degree. He was a successful salesman at a local Sears store, and he was doing all of this with a goal toward the long term. He was a great salesman. He was studying marketing.

He was going to get his degree, but he really loved music. His dream was to become a musician. Even as this 19-year-old college student was looking for a job, he was recording as much music as he could, and his goal was to

take his music and not keep the money he collected from it for himself; he was going to donate it to charity. So he was going to pursue his college degree, go out and continue to be a salesman, and do music on the side simply to make enough money to give to charity.

What an amazing kid, 19 years old. In an attempted robbery on March 12 of this year, Christopher Walker was shot dead in Milton, GA.

Dominique Boyer was 18 when he was shot in Atlanta, GA, on March 28.

All of these victims, by the way, are part of this chart. Unfortunately, I do not have to go back 6 months or a year or a year and a half to find an endless list of victims. We are just talking about March of this year.

Dominique was 18 years old and just months away from his high school graduation when he became an unintentional, innocent victim of a shooting in DeKalb County, GA. Dominique was a senior at Columbia High School and he had been planning to go to college to become an accountant.

His classmates remember him as happy, as outgoing, as a very respectful kid with a lot of friends. He was the oldest of four siblings. He was just months away; he was going to graduate this fall. He was going to go to college, and he was an unintentional, innocent victim of a shooting.

We hear this over and over and over. I have read now probably 50- or 60-plus stories of kids—18, 19 years old—who have been killed. The highest incidence of gun violence occurs to 19-year-olds, I think, followed by 18-year-olds, followed by 17-year-olds. It is really teenagers who are getting killed out there. Unfortunately, in Connecticut, it was 6- and 7-year-olds, but kids who are not much older than the kids who died in Sandy Hook are dying every day in this country from gun violence, and most of them are unintentional, innocent victims. At some level a lot of people want to believe that the people who are killed in urban gun violence are killed in connection with a crime or are wrapped up in gangs. Some of that is true, but the stories we are hearing are of good kids who were doing the right thing; who, as the President has said, were not in the wrong place at the wrong time but were in the right place at the right time.

Dominique Boyer was a respectful kid who treated everybody well but just happened to be in the way of a bullet that maybe was not designated for him but should not have been flying through the air in the first place.

Hakeem Jackson was 17 years old when he was killed a couple weeks before Dominique on March 11, 2013, in Knoxville, TN. He was just on a weekend visit to Knoxville visiting his family and his grandmother. Hakeem's mom described him as a quiet and bashful boy but sometimes a little bit of a prankster.

On a Friday night he asked his grandmother for some money. He was 17 years old. He just wanted to go down

to the store. While he was walking down a street in a city that was not even his own, a gray sedan pulled up and shot Hakeem several times. Those shots eventually killed him. He was 17 years old, just visiting his grandmother in Knoxville, TN.

Let me share a couple more stories with you.

Kay Cornell Janus was on the other end of life's spectrum. She was 72 when she was shot just 1 day before Hakeem in Marietta, GA. She was known for her grace and her poise, and, again, as you have heard about a number of these victims, her radiant smile—something her family and friends remembered about her.

She was full of class. She loved fine food and wine and traveling and entertaining. Many of these hobbies became, over the course of her life, her passion. She was the mother of four, and she was the grandmother of two.

She was shot in her garage by her longtime boyfriend. Neighbors suspect that the murder may have been the result of a simple dispute they were having over finances. It ended in Kay, 72 years old, being gunned down.

Zachary Rose was killed in January of this year. He was celebrating his 22nd birthday. Two days later, after his 22nd birthday, he was killed. His loves were skateboarding and cars and dogs—dogs at the top of his list. He absolutely loved dogs, and he had a Great Dane, Mathias, that all of his friends said after he was killed was really “his baby.”

He actually loved dogs so much that he ran his own dog training company. Zachary's friend dedicated a page of their company's Web site to help raise money for Zachary's funeral because his family was going through very tough times, and when he was killed, leaving behind three siblings—a brother and two sisters—they did not have enough money to pay for his funeral.

His friends said Zachary was the kind of guy who “literally had no enemies”—killed by guns on January 28, 2013.

His family did not have the money to pay for his funeral. It is the story of a lot of these families. Families are already going through tough times. Luckily, a lot of these communities rally to the victims' defense to raise the money for these funerals. But think about that. Think about going through the pain and the grief of losing your child or your son or your daughter or your grandson or your sister or your brother, and then looking into your family's accounts and not even having enough money to bury them. That is the reality of what is happening across this Nation today because it happens too often.

There has been another trend in the last several months that has in some ways been even more disturbing than the overall incidence of 3,000-plus people having died across our country. We have seen a very disturbing trend, in the last several months even, of acci-

dental deaths from guns. As we have said, there is no one solution to this plague of gun violence. It is getting tougher on our gun laws: making sure criminals do not have them who should not, trying to take some of these dangerous weapons—the assault weapons and the dangerous high-capacity ammunition—off the streets, having a better mental health system. But it is also about gun safety. It is also about making sure if someone is going to be a gun owner they be a responsible gun owner, that they put a lock on their gun and keep it away from children.

Over the past several months there have been four absolutely tragic shootings involving toddlers.

A Tennessee woman was shot in the stomach by her 2-year-old child who discovered a Glock 9 stored underneath a pillow. The child picked it out from under the pillow, discharged the weapon, and shot Rekia Kid while she was sleeping.

Josephine Fanning was shot and killed in Tennessee when a 4-year-old boy discharged a handgun owned by Fanning's husband, who had just kept the gun loaded, in his words, “for just a moment.” A 4-year-old boy.

A 6-year-old boy was accidentally shot and killed by his 4-year-old playmate in a quiet residential New Jersey neighborhood. “This never should have happened,” the victim's uncle said. “It's horrible.”

A 3-year-old died recently of an accidental self-inflicted gun wound in South Carolina after finding a gun in an apartment and discharging the weapon.

A 2-year-old shooting his mother, a 4-year-old shooting an adult, a 6-year-old getting shot by a 4-year-old, and a 3-year-old shooting themselves—these accidental shootings are likely not going to be solved by a background check law or by a ban on high-capacity ammunition, but it just speaks to how big this problem is. It speaks to how many guns are out there.

It also speaks to the fact that as part of our debate on background checks and on specific weaponry that should be kept in the hands of the military, we should be having a conversation about gun safety as well.

Lastly, I want to talk about the importance of today.

Senator Kaine, I believe, was down on the floor earlier talking about the 6-year anniversary of the worst mass shooting in this country's history at Virginia Tech. I want to close by just telling a few final stories about those victims. I have told some of them when I have been down here before, but that shooting was in some ways just as tragic.

In Sandy Hook, we had a little glimpse into who these little boys and girls would be. When we heard these stories about their intellectual curiosity and their kindness and their grace, we had a window into what amazing people folks such as Dylan Hockley and Grace McDonnell and

Madeleine Hsu would eventually grow up to be.

In Virginia Tech, though, we had a much better window into these kids because though they had not reached maturity, they had already succeeded by getting into Virginia Tech, and we could really see the kind of contributions they were going to leave.

Austin Michelle Cloyd lived life boldly. She had traveled the world with her family. She was interested in everything from politics to environmental issues to international relations. She was a very tall girl and everybody remembered what Austin looked like because she had flaming red hair and a big, bright smile. She played basketball throughout her middle and high school years, and she worked four summers with the Appalachia Service Project to help make homes better for people—to make them warmer and safer and dryer.

She loved reading and scuba diving and music and concerts, and she was just a girl who was absolutely full of life. She lived her life for a purpose. She knew she wanted to help people.

She had a brilliant mind and a compassionate heart and she had an iron will. We will never know what Austin was going to truly grow up to be. She was killed that day at Virginia Tech.

Jocelyne Couture-Nowak was a French Canadian who had a passion for teaching French. She was a faculty member who was killed that day. Before she moved to Virginia, she was very well known for being instrumental in helping to develop a school to ensure access for francophone families who wanted a safe school environment and a French language education.

She went between Nova Scotia and southwest Virginia. She loved the bucolic countryside, and she loved to go on hikes, whether it was in Virginia or back in Nova Scotia.

She was passionate for French education. She was passionate that other people would learn the language, and she still had a lot of passion to give. But she was killed that day as well.

Matthew Gwaltney was a second-year master's student in the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department. His professional goal was to go out and increase awareness and education about environmental issues. He wanted to encourage people to be proactive in their individual lives to try to better our environment, whether it was just leaving a smaller and more confined footprint on this world or going out and creating systems in their community to lower the impact of pollution.

His passion was environmental awareness, but he was also a big fan of sports. He was a detailed expert in sports statistics, and you could not beat Matthew in a game of trivia. He loved his Hokies and was a devoted fan, and he went to every ACC sporting event he could. Professionally, he loved the Atlanta Braves and the Chicago White Sox and the Chicago Bulls.

Matthew was going to lead a great life—one that was lived outwardly. But

we never got to see the maturity of his passion for environmental awareness, nor his passion for the hobbies he loved because Matthew was killed that day at Virginia Tech.

The list just goes on and on and on—3,400 people killed since December 14. I have in the Chamber just a few of the pictures of the young men and women who have been killed in Hartford and Bridgeport and New York and Washington and Newtown, CT. It is their memories we will honor this week as we go forward on one of the most important public safety debates this Chamber and this city has ever had.

I will be back down to the Senate floor later this week to continue to engage my colleagues in talking about the real reason we are here; that is, the victims of gun violence all across this country.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the period for debate only on S. 649 be extended until 5:30 p.m., and that the majority leader be recognized at that time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MANCHIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I 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. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I wish to begin by saying my thoughts and prayers, similar to those of so many Americans, are with Boston today, with the families and loved ones of those who have lost lives or been injured. I offer my deepest condolences to the families of those victims and my sincere gratitude to the courageous first responders, including many of the runners who courageously went to the aid of people who were grievously injured and some maimed by this horrific act of terror. Whether we call it a terrorist act or an act of terror or simply a criminal murder, it is certainly to be condemned and investigated as thoroughly and promptly as possible. I know the full resources of the Federal Government have been devoted to this purpose.

We are an open society. We appear soft-hearted to people who want to do harm to a democracy. We are vulnerable because we are a democracy and we are open. We have resolved that we will not become totalitarian or anti-democratic; that we will remain a free and open society. That is the wonder and strength and uniqueness of America, the greatest Nation in the history of the world.

Horror has brought us to this debate, the horror of gun violence, the horror of what has happened in our schools, our streets, our neighborhoods, in places where the public is admitted, in-

deed welcomed, whether it is movie theaters or places of worship or schools, places where the public has access and where, therefore, all our citizens, most especially our children, are vulnerable.

Last week when we opened this debate we spent a lot of time talking about victims. Senator MURPHY and I spent a lot of time on the Senate floor discussing Newtown and the victims of that unspeakable and unimaginable tragedy. Today we remember another similar tragedy, facilitated by the same extraordinarily dangerous weapons in the hands of people who should not be permitted to have firearms or guns. Six years ago today, Seung-Hui Cho used two semiautomatic handguns and nine 10- and 15-round magazines to kill 32 innocent victims and injure 23 at Virginia Tech University. Many of those weapons he used were purchased online. Others were purchased at local stores without a background check.

As somebody who has seen my own State grapple with this tragedy, I extend my condolences to the families of Virginia Tech victims—some of their families were here earlier today—and all who have felt the impact of this absolutely senseless slaughter, as senseless and unspeakable as what happened in Newtown just 4 months ago.

I wish to recognize the leadership of our two Senators from Virginia and their efforts to prevent another Virginia Tech. As he discussed earlier, Senator WARNER has been actively engaged in efforts to bring research and resources together to make our schools and campuses safer. His leadership has been extremely important. Colleges and universities play an extraordinarily important role in my own State of Connecticut. I know they are constantly working to keep their campuses safe. The School and Campus Safety Enhancements Act included in the gun violence legislation currently before this body would be an important step toward giving these very institutions of higher learning what they need to protect our students and support the kind of research that is necessary to develop new means and possibly new technology, new tools that our institutions of higher learning but also institutions of learning across-the-board, beginning with our elementary schools, need to do better.

I am proud to be cosponsor of this legislation. I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure its passage. Senator KAINE spoke so powerfully and eloquently on the floor earlier today, showed such grace under pressure—which is one of the definitions of courage—in responding to the Virginia Tech tragedy. He has worked to deal with the wounds. He has resolved to learn from Virginia Tech and indeed he worked as a Governor to seek safer campuses across Virginia and across the country. He fought to put in place commonsense laws that would prevent shooters such as Seung-Hui Cho from having access to the arsenal

he used 6 years ago. I thank Senator KAINE for helping to lead the effort for a ban on high-capacity ammunition magazines such as the ones used at Virginia Tech and used at Newtown and used in so many other shootings across the country over the years. With his support, I plan to offer a high-capacity magazine ban, on behalf of Senator LAUTENBERG, in an amendment to the gun violence legislation currently before the Senate.

I am proud to be working with others, such as Senator FEINSTEIN, Senator SCHUMER, and my colleague Senator MURPHY, in that effort. I encourage my colleagues to work with me and Senator KAINE to pass commonsense legislation as we mark the tragedy at Virginia Tech and we remember the victims of Newtown.

I thank the families of the victims of these shootings from all across the country who have come to Washington over these past days, and indeed weeks, working so hard and so diligently, working through their grief and pain, doing something that is so difficult for them so others can be spared this pain and grief.

Many will face difficult votes, perhaps as early as tomorrow. We have approached the cusp of these vital and historic votes. Many of these votes will be difficult for my colleagues. But as difficult as they are for them—and for many whose difficulty I respect—let's remember how difficult it has been for those families of the victims to come here to look you in the eye as they have done and say: Let's now do something about gun violence. That is what I heard in the wake of Newtown, as early as the evening that horrific tragedy occurred. Let's do something about the guns.

We have the opportunity to do something about the guns. As Gabby Giffords said to the Judiciary Committee just weeks ago: Be bold. Be courageous. America is counting on you.

That is her urging to us. That is our obligation and our historic opportunity.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HONORING BRITISH PRIME MINISTER BARONESS MARGARET THATCHER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the resolution that is at the desk honoring the life, legacy, and example of British Prime Minister Baroness Margaret Thatcher.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 98) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we have just agreed to a resolution honoring the late Margaret Thatcher before her funeral tomorrow. It is our intention for that resolution to be a statement equal to her legacy. Her work with Ronald Reagan reinvigorated the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Margaret Thatcher was one of the most influential and revolutionary figures of the 20th century, and failing to name her achievements would do her memory and legacy a great disservice. It would be unheard of to commemorate Churchill, for example, and ignore his heroic role in steering his countrymen through the Battle of Britain, nor would we think of honoring Lincoln without mentioning the Civil War. Doing the right thing when it is not easy or popular is what defines leadership, and it defined Margaret Thatcher. It is fitting that the Senate honored her legacy just a few moments ago.

Margaret Thatcher didn't just change a country or give people hope, she helped alter the course of history. It is true that she did not just go along to get along. Had she done so, I am sure we would have long since forgotten her.

Let's honor her for all she did. Let's acknowledge the enormity of what she accomplished. Let's mention her achievements by name, and the resolution does that. As I said, we owe Margaret Thatcher a tribute equal to her legacy.

SAFE COMMUNITIES, SAFE SCHOOLS ACT OF 2013—Continued

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I rise today as a mother, a grandmother, and a Senator—a Senator whose State has been touched far too many times by gun violence, including mass shootings. I also wish to reiterate my support for the people of Boston who are dealing with the aftermath of senseless, tragic, and cowardly violence.

I think I need to put into context why I have for so long been an advocate of gun safety measures. In January 1989, a gunman stepped onto the grounds of Cleveland Elementary School in Stockton, CA. He fired at least 106 bullets from an AK-47 rifle across the schoolyard. He killed 5 children, ages 6 to 9, and 1 teacher, and he injured 29 other students before fatally shooting himself. This horrific crime led California to enact an assault weapons ban and, of course, we know that assault weapons ban in California is still in place. I so appreciate Senator FEINSTEIN's leadership in trying to, once again, authorize at the Federal level an assault weapons ban.

Californians still remember this tragedy in Stockton, just as the Nation will always remember the victims of the horrific events of Friday, December 14, 2012, at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

I flash forward to from 1989 and the Stockton tragedy to a law office in San Francisco in 1993, where a crazed gunman—I remember his name, but I will not say it—with an assault weapon killed eight people and wounded six. One of those people was a brave lawyer who threw his body over the body of his wife, sacrificing his own life to save hers. That young man was one of my son's best friends, and I know personally how these horrific and senseless tragedies live on with the survivors—the parents, the spouses, the children, the families, and the friends. It changes their lives and it pierces their hearts forever.

I have told you a couple of stories about California. But let me say this: Let's look at what has happened across this Nation since Sandy Hook. In the 120 days since Sandy Hook, more than 2,200 Americans have been killed by gun violence. Hardly any place was spared.

We know there are many, many firearms in America. There are 300 million firearms in the United States. If you were to divide that up, that would be one gun per person, of course. There are many people who have many, many guns.

This is a 50-percent increase—the number of guns in circulation—since 1995, when there were, as I say, about half that number.

When I go home and I speak about this—and I write about it—I say: There are 31,000 reasons why we need to pass sensible gun laws because—31,000—that is the number of people who die every year in America from gun violence. That is 87 people every single day, on average.

You look at this: 31,000 people dying every year from gun violence. So how do you get a sense of what that is? I think back. One of the reasons I got into politics in the first place was the war in Vietnam and trying to end it, first as an activist and then, actually, as an elected leader in my country. I think about how many people died in the 10-year war of Vietnam and it was