

connection 95 percent of the time, the Christian Science Monitor ignored it every time, USA TODAY ignored it 98 percent of the time, and the New York Times ignored it 90 percent of the time. So the scam of laundering money through independent-sounding organizations works. The media lets it work. The vast majority of scientists agree that global warming is occurring, but a recent Gallup Poll revealed that only 62 percent of Americans believe that the vast majority of scientists agree that global warming is occurring.

Well over 90 percent of scientists agree that climate change is happening and that humans are the main cause. The only uncertainty is about how bad it is going to be, and the leading research predicts warmer air and seas, rising sea levels, stronger storms, and more acidic oceans.

Most major players in the private sector actually get it. While the big fossil fuel polluters try to confuse the public in order to boost their bottom line and prolong their pollution, hundreds of leading corporations understand that climate change ultimately undermines our entire economy. Let me mention some of the examples: the Ford Motor Company; Coca-Cola; GE; Walmart; the insurance giant Munich Re; Alcoa, the great aluminum maker; Maersk; Procter & Gamble; FedEx; and the so-called BICEP group, which includes eBay, Intel, Starbucks, Adidas, and Nike.

This notion that this is a hoax, that there is doubt, is belied by some of the most respected names in the private sector. Those companies join the National Academies, they join NASA, they join the U.S. Department of Defense, the Government Accountability Office, the American Public Health Association, and, yes, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, as well as a majority of Americans in understanding that it is time to wake up, to end this faux controversy that has been cooked up by the fossil fuel industry, and to do the work in Congress that needs to be done to protect Americans from the harms of carbon pollution.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:04 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 7 p.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. DONNELLY).

SAFE COMMUNITIES, SAFE SCHOOLS ACT OF 2013—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I want to start off by saying I am deeply saddened by the tragedy in Boston. Franni's and my thoughts and prayers

are with everyone who has been affected.

Franni and I went to school in Boston. In fact, we met more than 43 years ago at a freshman mixer in Copley Square, so we know Boston. We have witnessed firsthand the kind of compassion and resilience we have seen from Bostonians, and I have faith we will find whoever did this and bring that person or those persons to justice.

Mr. President, I came to the floor today to speak in support of the gun violence legislation we are considering. Since the tragedy in Newtown, we have been asking ourselves what we should do to address this problem of gun violence in our country.

My primary focus in the wake of Newtown has been on mental health. Improving the access to mental health care has been one of my top priorities since I came to the Senate, and I am glad people are beginning to focus more on the issue. If we are going to make mental health a part of this, let's make it more than just a talking point. Let's make it a true national priority. Let's really do something to improve access to treatment for folks who need it.

Since the first day I got here, I have been pushing the administration to issue the final regulations for the Wellstone-Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act, which requires insurance plans to cover mental health and addiction services and to do so to the same extent they cover medical and surgical services. Five years after that bill was signed into law, at long last the administration has promised to implement it, and to do so by the end of the year. I expect the administration to follow through on that commitment.

I have also introduced the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act to help law enforcement officers respond to mental health crises in their communities and improve access to mental health treatment for people who end up in the criminal justice system. This is a bipartisan, bicameral bill that I have been working on since last year, well before the tragedy in Newtown.

In January I introduced the Mental Health in Schools Act which will improve children's access to mental health services. Catching these issues at an early age is very important. I met with some mothers from the Mounds View School District in Minnesota about this matter. Their children's lives, their own lives, and their families' lives were changed for the better because the kids got access to the mental health care they needed at an early age.

My bill has 17 cosponsors and key provisions have been included in a package which was recently reported out of the HELP Committee. I look forward to considering that legislation on the Senate floor soon. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

These are important measures, but let me be absolutely clear: The last

thing we need to do is stigmatize mental illness. I said this many times before, and I will say it again because it bears repeating, and it is very important to me: The vast majority of people with mental illness are no more violent than the general population. In fact, they are more frequently the victims of violence than others are.

There is a very small subset of those with serious mental illnesses who may become more violent if they are not diagnosed and treated, and that is the one place where this issue of mental health intersects with the issue of violence. Improving access to mental health care is all about improving people's lives. It is about helping people with mental illness and their families by making them happier and more productive people. However, today we are talking about gun violence prevention legislation.

People have strongly held views on both sides—or all sides—of this issue. Not only is that true in Minnesota, it is true throughout the country. Minnesota has a proud tradition, like Indiana, of responsible gun ownership.

We are home to many sportsmen and sportswomen. Generations of Minnesotans have learned to hunt pheasants, deer, and ducks from their parents, their grandparents, their aunts and uncles, friends and neighbors. We cherish our traditions and our Second Amendment right to bear arms for collection, protection, and sport.

Minnesota has both urban and rural areas. It is home to moms, dads, teachers, law enforcement officers, and health care providers too. We have members of the National Rifle Association and members of the Brady Campaign Against Gun Violence.

After the shooting at Sandy Hook, I reached out to my constituents. I got on the phone, I traveled across the State, I convened roundtables, I talked to hunters, school officials, law enforcement officers, and mental health experts. I wanted to hear Minnesotans' ideas, their hopes, their concerns, and their thoughts because it was and is important to me to approach this in a deliberative way.

Here is what I took away from these conversations: Minnesotans want us to take action to reduce gun violence and make our communities safer, but they want us to do it in a way that honors the Second Amendment and respects Minnesota's culture of responsible gun ownership. There is a balance to be struck there.

The overwhelming majority of gun owners are law-abiding citizens who responsibly use their guns for recreation and self-protection. Their concern should not be dismissed or trivialized. Their rights should not be undermined because of the horrible acts of just a few. So I suggest that our goal should be to take whatever steps we can to reduce gun violence and improve public safety without unduly burdening law-abiding, responsible gun owners. I believe that is what the Safe Communities, Safe Schools Act, the Manchin-

Toomey amendment, and the assault weapons ban do.

First, we need to improve the Nation's background check system, and we need to strengthen our laws to combat straw purchases and gun trafficking. This was one of the key recommendations I have taken away from my meeting with law enforcement leaders in Minnesota. I think background checks are the single most important thing we can do to save lives.

Today background checks are required only when a gun is sold by a federally licensed dealer. Background checks are used to determine whether a prospective buyer has a felony conviction, is a fugitive from the law, has a restraining order against him, or has a serious mental illness. The problem is that people who cannot pass a background check simply go to a gun show or go on the Internet or to the classified ads to get a gun instead, and that is exactly what they do.

By some estimates about 40 percent of all gun transactions are processed without a background check. This is like having two lines at the airport: one where people go through the security screening and one where they don't, and those passengers are the ones who choose which line they stand in. Would anyone feel comfortable on a plane if they knew that 40 percent of the passengers didn't go through the security check and they were the ones who chose not to go through the security check?

The Manchin-Toomey amendment will expand background checks to gun shows and other congressional transactions. These checks are not an undue burden. They can typically be conducted in a matter of minutes through NICS, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. The amendment excludes certain exchanges, such as when a Minnesotan hands his gun down to his son or to her daughter.

The Manchin-Toomey amendment fixes another problem. We all know background checks are only as good as the database they use. The problem is that a lot of States are not submitting court documents and other records to NICS. The amendment will provide new incentives and penalties to make sure the States do a better job.

This law will work. Since we started administering instant background checks more than 1.7 million felons, fugitives, domestic abusers, and people with serious mental illnesses have been denied access to firearms—and that is under the system that exists today with all of its loopholes and flaws.

We have seen that women are less likely to be killed by an intimate partner in States that have expanded their own background check systems. And, look, about 90 percent of Americans want us to pass this measure—90 percent. This is not a Republican idea, it is not a Democratic idea, it is just a good idea.

I think it would be a remarkable failure of our democracy if we cannot get

this done. If we cannot get this done, I am afraid it is because we have relied on fears and falsehoods instead of on facts.

For instance, some have argued that an expanded background check system will result in a Federal gun registry, but Federal gun registries are banned under existing law and the legislation we are considering would not repeal or weaken that. In fact, the Manchin-Toomey amendment would strengthen the current prohibition on Federal gun registries.

The other argument we have heard is that we should not bother improving the background check system until we do a better job prosecuting those who cheat the background check system under current law. There is really no reason we cannot do both, enforce and improve the law. In fact, that is exactly what the legislation does.

This legislation expands the background check system and strengthens the penalties for straw purchasers and gun traffickers. So I strongly support these proposed improvements to the background check system and to our gun trafficking laws.

The Judiciary Committee also reported Senator FEINSTEIN's assault weapons ban to the Senate floor. The bill would ban the future manufacture of large-capacity magazines and certain weapons with military-style characteristics. This bill will not require anyone to forfeit a gun he or she already has.

We saw the damage assault weapons or large-capacity magazines can do at Newtown, Tucson, Aurora, and elsewhere. Here is what Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn said about assault weapons at a recent Judiciary Committee hearing:

Assault weapons are built to inflict violence against humans. Their military characteristics are not merely cosmetic in nature. These weapons are designed for combat. They are designed to quickly, easily, and efficiently cause lethal wounds to humans.

We are not talking about just mass shootings. For instance, studies suggest that large-capacity magazines may be used in up to a quarter of all gun crimes and 41 percent of police murders.

I believe the assault weapons ban will make our communities safer without unduly interfering with the rights of responsible gun owners. I think the bill strikes an appropriate balance. Others disagree, and I respect their views, but there are a few arguments that have been advanced against the assault weapons ban that I wish to address.

The first argument we have heard against Senator FEINSTEIN's bill is that Justice Department studies have proved the assault weapons ban was ineffective. During our first hearing, a witness said: "Independent studies, including a study from the Clinton Justice Department, proved that ban had no impact on lowering crime." And others, including my colleagues, repeated this claim.

Well, I went back and looked at the studies. What they actually say—and they say it over and over—is that it was premature to draw definitive conclusions about the ban's effectiveness. Here is what they said:

It is premature to make definitive assessments on the ban's impact on gun violence. The effects of the [assault weapon and large-capacity magazine] ban have yet to be fully realized; therefore, we recommend continued study.

The ban's reauthorization or expiration could affect gunshot victimizations, but predictions are tenuous.

I could go on and on. The reports repeat this point time and time again. If anything, the Justice Department report suggests a ban would be effective. For example, they said: "It could conceivably prevent hundreds of gunshot victimizations annually and produce notable cost savings in medical care."

It is simply not possible to read those studies and honestly say they prove an assault weapons ban is ineffective.

Another argument we have heard against Senator FEINSTEIN's bill is it will undermine one's ability to defend oneself. But here is the thing: The record contains no evidence of a real case in which someone actually needed a large-capacity magazine or assault weapon for self-defense.

During our first hearing, a witness submitted many examples where guns were used in self-defense, but I have not seen any evidence that any one of those cases actually involved a weapon that would be banned under Senator FEINSTEIN's bill. At our last markup, one of my colleagues submitted some additional cases for the record, but, again, after reviewing that list, I am not persuaded an assault weapon or large-capacity magazine was needed for self-defense in any of those instances.

Rather than presenting real cases in which someone actually needed an assault weapon or a large-capacity magazine to defend oneself, opponents of Senator FEINSTEIN's bill instead asked us repeatedly to imagine hypothetical situations where these weapons were needed for self-defense.

Sure, I can imagine hypothetical cases, but I am not sure what value that holds, because I can also imagine someone using a large-capacity magazine or an assault weapon to massacre people at an elementary school or a movie theater or a supermarket parking lot. I can imagine these things because they really happened. That is the reality. And it is reality we should be talking about.

I asked Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, the president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, about this and he said: "This idea that these weapons are for self-defense is, based on our experience, completely absurd."

The final argument I wish to address is one of the most important. Some have argued a ban on assault weapons and large-capacity magazines is unconstitutional. The problem with the argument is it typically rests on the premise that the Second Amendment is absolute or unlimited.

For example, during our committee markup, one of my colleagues asked Senator FEINSTEIN whether she would “consider it constitutional for Congress to specify that the First Amendment shall apply only to the following books and shall not apply to the books that Congress has deemed outside the protection of the Bill of Rights?”

The point my colleague was trying to make, I think, is that banning certain guns is like banning certain speech, and that this ban would violate the Constitution. This line of argument assumes the Second Amendment is absolute and unlimited—that any new gun law necessarily is unconstitutional.

But one doesn’t have to be a constitutional scholar to know that rights are not unlimited. In fact, my colleague’s question actually makes that very point. There are books that are not protected by the First Amendment. The Bill of Rights does not protect libel. The Bill of Rights does not protect child pornography. One cannot yell “fire” in a crowded movie theater where there is no fire.

And, likewise, the Second Amendment does not protect the rights of everyone to carry whatever weapon he likes in anyplace he wishes for whatever purpose he desires. The Second Amendment does not entitle felons or fugitives or domestic abusers or people with serious mental illnesses to carry guns. It does not entitle Americans to own a fully automatic machine gun or a bazooka or to bear nuclear arms.

Here is what Justice Antonin Scalia said in the Heller decision:

Like most rights, the right secured by the Second Amendment is not unlimited. . . . The right is not a right to keep and carry any weapon whatsoever in any manner whatsoever and for whatever purpose.

Senator DURBIN chaired a hearing on this issue in February. I was persuaded by Professor Lawrence Tribe’s testimony. He examined the legislation and said: “I’m convinced that nothing under discussion in the Senate Judiciary Committee represents a threat to the Constitution or even comes close to violating the second amendment.” Remember, Professor Tribe has supported gun rights. He argued for an individual’s right to bear arms many years before the Heller decision.

I was also persuaded by the DC Circuit Court of Appeals’ analysis in Heller II. There, the Court examined the District of Columbia’s assault weapons ban by asking a series of questions. First, to what extent does this law burden an individual’s right to bear arms for lawful purposes? Second, how does that burden compare with the public’s interest in implementing the ban? Finally, is the ban sufficiently well tailored to that public interest?

This is the sort of inquiry that is typical in constitutional cases, and I think it is appropriate in the Second Amendment context too. It is nuanced and principled, not absolutist. The constitutional question is not whether a law touches upon Second Amendment

interests at all. The question is whether the law unduly burdens those interests—whether it strikes an appropriate balance between the Second Amendment interests at stake and the public’s interest in its safety. We don’t have to choose between the Second Amendment and saving lives. That is a false choice.

The Heller II Court correctly concluded that the District of Columbia’s law—their assault ban—struck an acceptable balance and upheld DC’s ban on assault weapons and large-capacity magazines. In fact, every court that considered laws banning assault weapons and large-capacity magazines has upheld those laws as constitutional. I am confident Senator FEINSTEIN’s bill will be upheld in the courts as well.

When my colleague began drawing comparisons to the First Amendment, I was reminded of what Justice Potter Stewart famously said of obscenity: “I know it when I see it.” The debate on this issue changed the day that gunman massacred 20 little children and 6 educators with an assault weapon and large-capacity magazines at an elementary school in Newtown. That was an obscenity. Americans knew it when they saw it.

I hope we will continue to debate these issues in the days ahead. Debate is important, especially when people feel so strongly on both sides of this issue. I respect those who hold different views, and I hope they respect mine.

As we debate this issue, I hope we keep in mind what Gabby Giffords, Miya and Sam Rahamin, and Neil Heslin told us during our committee hearings. Gabby Giffords was shot in the head during the massacre in Tucson in 2011. Six people died that day. The youngest among them was Christina-Taylor Green, the 9-year-old girl who loved to dance and who very well may have followed in Gabby’s footsteps.

Christina-Taylor had just been elected to the student council at her elementary school and she had taken an interest in public service at a young age. That is why she was visiting her Congresswoman. Christina-Taylor was killed with the 13th bullet fired that day. Christina-Taylor Green is not with us anymore, but by some miracle Gabby is, and Gabby has used this second lease on life to be a voice for people such as Christina. Gabby mustered every bit of energy she could to appear before the Judiciary Committee in January. Let’s not forget what she said, which was this:

Speaking is difficult, but I must say something important. Violence is a big problem. Too many children are dying. Too. Many. Children. We must do something. It will be hard. But the time is now. You. Must. Act. Be bold. Be courageous. Americans are counting on you.

Miya and Sam Rahamin asked us to take action too. They lost their father Reuven when a gunman opened fire at a sign factory in Minneapolis in Sep-

tember. Reuven is an immigrant from Israel and lived the American dream. He started a company that employed dozens of people over the years and exported products to the rest of the world, even to China—something Reuven was always eager to tell people. And Reuven was especially proud of his patented method for making Braille signs which, obviously, helped the blind. That was Reuven’s thing—helping people. He was active in my synagogue and in his community, and he will always be remembered for his generous spirit.

Miya and Sam gave me a letter in January just a few weeks after Sandy Hook and a few months after the mass shooting that took their father’s life, and others. This is what the letter said:

While Congress cannot prevent every death from gun violence, it has a moral obligation to attempt to save as many lives as possible. By passing this legislation, Congress can prevent some Americans from receiving the call that is dreaded most—that their father or mother, brother or sister, spouse or child will not be coming home. . . . I want my story told so that other families will not have to go through the devastation that mine has been through.

And then there is Neil Heslin. He came to Washington to testify at a Judiciary Committee hearing a few weeks ago. Neil told us about the morning of the shooting at Sandy Hook when his son Jesse was killed. On the way to school that morning, Neil and Jesse stopped at the deli to get breakfast. Neil got coffee. Jesse got what he called coffee, which was really hot chocolate. That is the part of the story that has really stayed with me. It is a small detail but it is a pure detail. It says something about how an innocent child looks up to his dad.

Neil was in a good mood. Christmas was around the corner and he had plans to make gingerbread houses with Jesse and Jesse’s classmates that afternoon. Talking to Neil, you kind of got the sense that he was just as excited about this as the kids were—maybe more so. He really cherished this time together.

After they had their “coffees,” Neil dropped Jesse off at school. It was 9:04 a.m. Neil told us this:

Jesse gave me a hug and a kiss. And he said, “Goodbye, I love you.” Then he stopped, and he said, “I love mom, too.” That was the last I saw of Jesse.

Neil is not a political guy. In fact, he told us:

Half the time, I think it doesn’t matter which group of you guys runs things out there, no offense.

But he continued:

Let me tell you, when you’re sitting at a firehouse and it’s one in the morning and you’re hoping against hope that your son is still hiding somewhere in that school, you want any change that makes it one bit more likely that you’ll see your boy again.

For me, that is what this is about, to make any change that will make it one bit more likely that the next Jesse will live to make gingerbread houses at Christmas. To see so many innocent lives lost on that December morning,

so many hopes and dreams dashed, so many families grieving, the country was heartbroken, my wife and I were heartbroken, and we are still. I wish we could offer more than our thoughts and our prayers and the thoughts and prayers of our fellow Minnesotans.

We cannot turn back time. We cannot bring back the lives we have lost. But if there is something we can do today in this Chamber—this week in this Chamber—to save lives in our communities tomorrow, to make it more likely that boy will be coming out of the school, then I think we should do it.

Thank you.

I ask unanimous consent that the time for debate only be extended until 8:30 p.m. and that at 8:30 p.m. the majority leader be recognized.

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

Mr. FRANKEN. 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. 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.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order for the Manchin-Toomey amendment No. 715 to be set aside and the following amendments be in order to be called up: Grassley substitute amendment consistent with the summary, which is at the desk; Leahy-Collins amendment No. 713, trafficking; Cornyn amendment No. 719, conceal carry; Feinstein amendment No. 711, assault weapons-clip bans; Burr amendment No. 720, veterans-guns; Lautenberg-Blumenthal amendment No. 714, high-capacity clip ban; Barrasso amendment No. 717, privacy; and Harkin-Alexander amendment relative to mental health, the text of which is at the desk; that following leader remarks on Wednesday, April 17, the time until 4 p.m. be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees to debate the amendments concurrently; that at 4 p.m., the Senate proceed to vote in relation to the Manchin amendment No. 715; that upon disposition of the Manchin amendment, the Senate proceed to votes in relation to the remaining pending amendments in the order listed; that all amendments be subject to a 60-affirmative vote threshold; that no other amendments or motions to commit be in order to any of these amendments or the bill prior to the votes; that there be 2 minutes equally divided prior to each vote, and all after the first vote be 10-minute votes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we now proceed to a period of morning business, and Senators be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

RECOGNIZING DARN TOUGH VERMONT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Vermont is known for many of its great businesses and products. Among those successful companies is Darn Tough Vermont, whose brand represents the commitment to quality and excellence that defines Vermont. For nearly a decade, Darn Tough Vermont has been making the type of quality products our Nation has grown to expect from Vermonters.

Darn Tough was launched in 2004 by Ric Cabot, whose family founded Darn Tough's parent company in Vermont 35 years ago. For three generations, the Cabot family has stayed true to their roots and committed to the Northfield community. While other clothing manufacturers have outsourced their labor, the Cabots carry on where they began—manufacturing in New England, keeping faith with their customers and their 120 employees.

Darn Tough has a local feel to those who visit its factory and know its operators, but the company's name brand is known across the country and around the world wherever people appreciate a high-quality wool hiking and athletic sock, and its products are even worn overseas by our troops in combat. And as with other Vermont companies that equip and outfit our military, taxpayers can rest assured our troops are in good hands when their feet are in quality goods made by Darn Tough.

The Burlington Free Press recently paid tribute to Ric Cabot and all of the employees at Darn Tough for their hard work that continues to benefit our troops and the Vermont economy. I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the recent Free Press article entitled "Rebuilding American textiles, one sock at a time: Darn Tough measures success," be printed into the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD as follows:

[From Burlington Free Press, Apr. 4, 2012]

REBUILDING AMERICAN TEXTILES, ONE SOCK AT A TIME: DARN TOUGH MEASURES SUCCESS

(By Dan D'Ambrosio)

In Northfield, about 50 miles north of White River Junction where Ibex makes its home, Cabot Hosiery Mills, Inc. has been

making private label socks not only in America, but in Vermont, since 1978. Third generation owner Ric Cabot, who launched the company's own label—Darn Tough Vermont—in 2004, says one of the secrets to Darn Tough's success is the deceptive difficulty of making a good sock.

"People think socks are easy to do, it's just a pair of socks, how hard could it be?" Cabot said. "I guess that allows people to come into the market, but the staying power of companies that don't produce their own product is very short. There are so many people that are doing it well, it's hard to maintain a presence."

Perhaps the best symbol of Cabot's fastidiousness when it comes to socks is the 18-inch ruler projecting incongruously out of his back pocket when he greets visitors at the front door of the plain metal building that houses Darn Tough.

Cabot sat on the ruler and broke it about 20 years ago. He had one of Cabot's maintenance workers glue it back together, giving it the look of a broken bone that has healed well. There are certain things, Cabot says, you don't want to replace.

Cabot is never without his ruler as he roams the knitting floor and quality control departments of Darn Tough, handling socks, and measuring them.

"I sweat quarter-inches," Cabot says. "The first thing I do when I pick up a sock, is it the right length? If a sock is the right length, that means a lot of people are doing their jobs."

Later, at a quality audit station, Cabot picks up a sock, a men's large.

"Socks that made it this far, there's not going to be a huge hole, or wrong color, but the sizing should be right," he says. "This should be at or on 10¾ inches."

It's dead on. Socks, Cabot explains, are a math problem, "like most things in life." Among the numbers you have to work out are the size and gauge of the needles used to knit the socks. The gauge of the needle is basically how many needles you can fit in a circumference, because socks are knit in a circle.

"Those needles are in a cylinder," Cabot says. "You have to take into account needle size, cylinder size, what's the right weight of wool, nylon and Lycra? How are you going to reinforce it? How many stitches per inch? Where are you going to put the terry, the cushioning?"

Once you answer all of these many mathematical questions, Cabot says, you have the "DNA" of a Darn Tough sock. Then that DNA has to be expanded to hiking socks, running socks, cycling socks. Every sock has more in common, mathematically, than they don't have in common with other Darn Tough socks.

"That's the math of it, the durability story, the comfort story, the fit story," Cabot said.

But all those stories, he said, are trumped by another story when it comes to marketing Darn Tough socks: The Vermont story. Darn Tough employs about 120 people in Northfield, maintaining the New England tradition of textiles that once included hundreds of towns.

"You got to remind people, they know it, but you tell them nobody ever outsourced anything for quality," Cabot said. "That's the key."

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO RAMBLERS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last Monday, college basketball fans crowned their newest champion, the Louisville Cardinals. I wish to take a