

Is that not the way the system is supposed to work?

It is not wrong to give respect to the opinions of the American people, to ask what they think about issues and how they react to issues. There is nothing wrong with that. Actually, we should do that. But it is not right to poll a large and complex issue to find out what people want and then propose legislation that you say fulfills their desires, when the legislation does not fulfill those desires.

That is not the right thing to do, to promote good policy in America. As a matter of fact, polls show the American people want enforcement before amnesty by a 4-to-1 margin. Polls also show a clear majority actually favor a lower legal flow or the same amount of legal flow into our country from immigration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SESSIONS. They do not favor the huge increase of legal flow that is called for in this bill. Maybe later I will be able to talk about some of the difficulties of enforcement under current law.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I appreciate the great work my colleagues, Senator DURBIN, Senator SCHUMER, Senator RUBIO, and others, have done on the immigration bill. I am going to be pleased this week to support their work. But I came to the floor, as I have most weeks since being sworn in, to talk about the issue that has dominated discussions in my State over the past 6 months; that is, the issue of gun violence.

Last week we commemorated the 6-month anniversary of the deadly shooting in Sandy Hook, CT, in which 20 6- and 7-year-olds, first graders, were gunned down, and 6 of their teachers, including as well the gunman and his mother. A lot of families came down here last week to continue to lobby both the House and the Senate.

The look on their face is a complicated look. It is clearly first and foremost the look of incalculable grief as these families still try to figure out how to live the first summer of their life without their loved one, whether it be a first grader who would have been heading into second grade or a mother or a teacher or a brother or sister.

But there is also, in combination with this grief, this look of shock, this look of shock that frankly gets worse every time they come down here as they try to understand how this place could stand by and do nothing, absolutely nothing, in the wake of the horror that Newtown, CT, has seen.

At least we have taken a vote on the Senate floor. Very much like the description that Senator DURBIN gave earlier of his attempt several years ago

to pass the DREAM Act, we got 54 votes on the floor of the Senate. Under our Draconian and backward rules, that was not enough to get the bill done. But the House has not even scheduled a debate on gun violence legislation. Families in Newtown, CT, cannot understand that. They cannot understand how Senators and House Members can look them in the eye, can hear the story of their grief and do nothing.

They certainly cannot understand it after, almost to the day of the 6-month anniversary, another mass shooting occurred, this time on the other side of the country. We almost know the story before we hear it: Mass shooting; four dead; others wounded. In Newtown, we did not even have to pick up the paper to know it was going to be an assault weapon; it was going to be high-capacity magazines, once again.

Every story is a little bit different. So this one was an assault weapon that was partially handmade. This time there was a lot of ammunition that may not have been used. But it is a story that gets repeated over and over: Lots of people dead, assault weapon used, high-capacity magazines.

So for those people who say we cannot do anything about it, we can. We can. Because we can keep these dangerous, military-style weapons in the hands of law enforcement and people who are hired and trained to shoot these weapons for a living. We can say that 8, 10, 15 rounds is enough, that you do not need 30 rounds in a magazine, you do not need 100 rounds.

We can do something about our mental health system, try to reach out and give some help to people who are struggling, but we do not. That is what is so hard for the families of Newtown to understand. What is additionally hard for them to understand is this number. Since those 28 people were killed in Newtown on December 14, 5,033 people have died at the hands of gun violence across this country. This chart is a couple of days old, so we can take down the 33 and add a handful more.

I hope people here have gotten to understand the stories of people such as Jack Pinto and Dylan Hockley, Grace McDonnell. I hope people here have come to know the stories of the 20 little boys and girls whom we will never know their greatness because they were cut down in their youth.

But I wish to tell some other stories, about the common, everyday, almost routine gun violence that for some reason we have decided to live with in this country. So I am coming down here every week to tell another handful of stories about victims. Today, instead of telling detailed stories about specific victims, I wish to talk about one weekend in New York City.

About 2 weeks ago, the weekend of May 31 to June 2 was kind of the first truly warm outdoor weekend we had in the Northeast. The police, in places such as New York City and Bridgeport and Hartford, have come to dread that

first real hot summer weekend because the summers tend to come with a lot of guns and a lot of gun violence and a lot of shootings in places that maybe not a lot of Americans are used to, living in the safety and security of their neighborhoods.

Let me tell you what happened on that one weekend in one city, New York, NY. That weekend 25 people were shot over the course of 48 hours. Six people were killed over one single weekend in New York City. It started with Ivan Martinez, 21 years old, who was approached at about 3:25 a.m. on Friday night by a 20-year-old gunman and a woman in the Bronx. The gunman shot Martinez once in the head. Then he ran off with the woman.

Over the course of the weekend, 12 people were shot in Brooklyn, 8 people were shot in the Bronx, 4 in Queens. It went like this on Sunday night: At 12:10 a.m., a 21-year-old man was shot in the leg; at 2:36 a.m., a 22-year-old man was shot three times on East New York Avenue in Brooklyn; about an hour later at 3:30, a 20-year-old man was shot in the leg at Bedford Park in the Bronx; at 4:12 a.m. that morning, a 35-year-old man brought himself to Jamaica Hospital with a gunshot wound; at 11:40 a.m., a 15-year-old was shot in the leg and the back—at 11:40 a.m., middle of the day on Sunday, a 15-year-old shot in the leg and the back. At about 3:25, a gunman opened fire at the corner of Bedford and Lenox at Prospect-Lefferts Gardens.

The carnage in one weekend barely made news across this country. Most people would not know it if I did not come down to the Senate floor and tell this story. That is what we have come to accept in this country. This represents a dramatic drop in gun violence in New York City. So far we have had 440 shootings in New York City. That is a 23-percent reduction from last year. This has been a good year in New York City, and 440 people have been shot.

We do nothing about it. We cannot even bring ourselves to say criminals should not have guns, that gun trafficking, done out of the back of vans on the side streets of the Bronx and Brooklyn and Queens should be a crime. We cannot even do that on the floor of the Senate.

That weekend, maybe the most tragic shooting was one that didn't end up in a death, and that was the shooting of a little girl named Taylani Mazyck.

Three men opened fire in a wild episode that weekend in Brooklyn. People said it sounded as though it was the 4th of July, so many gunshots were going off in this neighborhood. It was likely gang activity, but the consequence of the shooting wasn't a gang member, it was a little 11-year-old girl who was struck through her neck. The bullet lodged in her spine. Although Taylani lived, she will never walk again.

Listen, I grieve every single morning and every single night for the 20 little girls and boys who died in Newtown, CT. If that is what has prompted us to

finally have a serious discussion here on the floor of the House and the Senate about gun violence reform, then so be it.

This is an average summer weekend in New York, with a little girl getting paralyzed and shootings throughout Saturday and Sunday night. People are getting shot in the middle of broad daylight on a Sunday afternoon. We can do something about it. We don't have the power to eliminate gun violence, we can't make bad people stop doing bad things, but we can pass commonsense laws such as background checks to check if criminals are getting guns or people with serious, dangerous mental illness. We can increase the resources of social workers and psychologists to try to reach some of these kids to try to teach them other ways of dealing with their anger than going in and reaching for a gun. We can lock up anybody who takes a bunch of guns from a gun show, throws them into a sack and sells them to criminals on the streets of New York, Bridgeport, Los Angeles, or Chicago.

We are not helpless. We have power in this place to do something about the mass shootings in Newtown, the mass shootings in Santa Monica, and the 5,033 people who have died across this country since December 14, in the 6 months since. It is not too late. We have a chance to come back to this floor after immigration, perhaps after the summer, let cooler heads prevail and allow this body to do something about the scourge of gun violence that so far this place has had no answer for. It causes the families of Newtown and the families of these victims to leave this place shaking their heads.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

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

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

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I earlier reported on some points in speeches I had made about some of the promises from the Gang of 8 concerning the legislation they have offered and why they are not fulfilled in their bill; for example, the triggers, and the merit-based movement they claim is significant in their legislation. I believe both of those are inaccurate.

Today I wanted to point out how government officials are refusing to enforce our current law and the unease that causes all of us. This bill does not fix that problem but gives even more power and discretion to the political appointees to waive, moderate, and get around the enforcement requirements of this new bill. These are the requirements of enforcement that our bill's sponsors say are important and must happen, but the bill does not require it to happen in many different places.

The story I will be telling is effective to explain why, despite the pleas from the American people for 30 years, lawlessness continues to rise in the immigration area and why we now have 11 million people here illegally.

Senator DURBIN earlier made a reference to the DREAM Act that he has worked hard on. It does present, for the most part, some of the most sympathetic claims for some sort of legalization in the country. The reason Congress rejected his legislation is because it overreached, in my opinion, which is not necessarily to say that it would have passed had it been more narrowly drafted.

It did not pass, but the President of the United States did it anyway. The President of the United States just did it anyway. He issued a directive to Federal law enforcement officers: Don't enforce this law, this law, and this law. Instead, do it as we tell you to.

That comes from the President to the Secretary of Homeland Security, to John Morton, and all the supervisors down to the officers.

Officers are up in arms about this. The ICE officers who enforce these laws have voted no confidence in Mr. John Morton. Today Mr. Morton announced his resignation after quite a long time being the center of this controversy. ICE officers said they had no confidence in him. He basically spent his time promoting amnesty, meeting with special-interest groups, not helping them do their job, and directing them not to do what the law plainly required them to do. It put them in an untenable position of having to follow their boss's political direction and violate their oath to follow the law.

Indeed, and amazingly, the law enforcement officers filed a lawsuit against Secretary Napolitano and Mr. Morton. They are claiming they are being forced to violate the law.

The judge has allowed this case to go forward, and it is being reviewed. It is in court right now. I never heard, as a federal prosecutor of nearly 15 years, of such a thing where the officers are suing their supervisors who won't let them follow plain law. This is the problem we are dealing with.

Over a year ago, as Senator DURBIN mentioned earlier, the Obama administration implemented a backdoor amnesty for an estimated 1.7 million, a Pew estimate, illegal immigrants through a program called the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, the DACA Program. It covers aliens who entered the country illegally when they were under the age of 16 and not older than 31 as of June 15, 2012.

Congress dealt with legislation to that effect and rejected it. It did not pass it. According to the published Department of Homeland Security guidelines, each DACA applicant is required to submit biographic and biometric information along with other information to prove they are eligible for the program.

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, USCIS, is to process the applications. In a little under a year, USCIS has approved an astonishing 291,859 applicants. On May 20, Kevin Palinkas, president of the National Citizenship and Immigration Service Council, the union representing the 12,000 USCIS adjudication officers who were supposed to adjudicate these matters, issued a press release reporting "a 99.5 percent approval rating for all illegal alien applications for legal status filed under the Obama administration's new deferred action for childhood arrivals, DACA, policies."

He reported a 99.5-percent approval. He attributed the exceptionally high approval rate to policies implemented by the Department of Homeland Security leadership that essentially made it impossible to make any real effort to eliminate fraud or identify dangerous criminal aliens.

He goes on to say:

DHS and USCIS leadership have intentionally established an application process for DACA applicants that bypasses traditional in-person investigatory interviews with trained USCIS adjudications officers. These practices were put in place to stop proper screening and enforcement.

He is saying the new policies that eliminate the interviews "were put in place to stop proper screening and enforcement, and guarantee that applications will be rubber-stamped for approval, a practice that virtually guarantees widespread fraud and places public safety at risk."

That is a pretty gutsy thing to say for a person who works in the Department of Homeland Security about his supervisors. I am sure he gave great thought to that.

This press statement goes on to say:

The attitude of USCIS management—These are the political appointees.

is not that the agency serves the American public or the laws of the United States, or public safety and national security, but instead that the agency serves illegal aliens and the attorneys which represent them. While we believe in treating all people with respect, we are concerned that this agency tasked with such a vital security mission is too greatly influenced by special interest groups—to the point that it no longer properly performs its mission.

That is a strong statement. It should be something we listen to as we evaluate whether we need to give more discretion to these supervisors when we pass a new bill.

Mr. Palinkas sent a letter to Congress on June 5 of this year, a few weeks ago, reiterating his concerns in light of S. 744.

He wrote and said this bill "would lead to the rubber-stamping of millions of applications for both amnesty and future admissions, putting the public safety and the taxpayer at risk."

He further stated:

In addition to the impossible time constraints imposed on each and every adjudicator to complete our assigned workloads, we are currently lacking the manpower, training, and office space to accomplish our mission and achieve what our jobs demand.